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Love as Devotion.
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's Relationship with Eranos
and Jungian Psychology¹

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1. Introduction

The history of Eranos can be found in an unwritten book, which I often peruse, read, examine, and compare – I also look at the pictures, since there are many pictures in this book, – and I search for the connections that form the whole in a meaningful and unifying way. The entire image, the pattern that becomes visible, is interwoven and entwined with the pattern of my own life to such an extent that it is really difficult to separate them.

(Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn)²

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- 1 I wish to thank the Fetzer Institute and particularly Prof. Lawrence Sullivan for inviting me to this *Fetzer Dialogue*, thus giving me the opportunity to present these reflections. I also wish to thank the Eranos Foundation for allowing me to quote from documents of the Eranos Archive. Note: the translations from German unpublished and published (but yet not translated) documents written by Olga Fröbe are mine. The original German text is referred to in the footnotes. Certain peculiarities of Olga Fröbe's style are most probably due to the fact that German was not her mother tongue. The quotations reproduce the original, apart from some minor adjustments concerning the punctuation. The evidences reported in the quotations correspond to the original ones.
- 2 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag. Im Psychologischen Club, Zürich; in Amsterdam bei Frau Hondius" (eleven typescript numbered pages with

Eranos is hardly my own idea just as the discoveries of modern techniques or the formula of a physicist do not belong to the inventor. Many people have such ideas at any time, being captivated by such intangible things, or, to formulate it in a better way, they are captivated and intrigued by these, so that they may serve as interpreters or mediators between the idea and Man. At times, those captivated managed to put the idea into a corresponding form or formula, and made it function. It was always serving the idea, even if many did not realize it, and the role of a person who is so captivated is exclusively that of a servant, and an instrumental one [...]. In the case of Eranos, things are different inasmuch as I myself am captivated; I am not the teacher, but merely prepare and set the stage where the essence will unfold. One can also say that it was I who had to create the Mandala, in the circle of which the work could proceed.

(Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn)³

underlines, annotations, and corrections by O. Fröbe-Kapteyn with crayon, 1939) (Eranos Foundation Archives – EF), 1. Orig. text: *“Die Geschichte von Eranos ist in einem ungeschriebenen Buche zu finden, in dem ich oft blättere, nachlese, prüfe, vergleiche – auch die Bilder ansehe, denn es gibt viele Bilder in diesem Buche, – und die Zusammenhänge suche, die das ganze sinnvoll und einheitlich gestalten. Das Gesamtbild, das Muster, das dabei sichtbar wird, ist so sehr mit dem Muster meines eigenen Lebens verwoben und verknüpft, daß es so sehr schwer ist, die beiden zu trennen.”*

- 3 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, *op. cit.*, 5. Orig. text: *“Eranos ist ebensowenig meine Idee als die Erfindungen der modernen Technik, die Formel eines Physikers dem Erfinder oder dem Physiker gehören. Zahllose Menschen aller Zeiten haben solche Ideen, solche intangible [sic] Dinge eingefangen, oder richtiger, sind von diesen eingefangen worden und ergriffen, damit sie als Interpret oder Vermittler zwischen der Idee und den Menschen dienen. Zeitweise gelang es den Ergriffenen, die Idee in entsprechender Form oder in einer Formel zu kleiden, und in der äußeren Welt wirksam zu machen. Immer war es Dienst an der Idee, wenn auch viele dies nicht begriffen, und die Rolle des so ergriffenen Menschen ist ausschließlich eine dienende, instrumentale [...]. Im Falle Eranos liegen die Dinge nur insofern anders, als daß ich selber, die Ergriffene, kein Lehrer [sic] bin, sondern nur die Bühne vorzubereiten und herzustellen hatte, worauf sich dann das Wesentliche abspielt. Man könnte auch sagen: ich hatte die Mandala zu schaffen, in deren Umkreisung das Werk vor sich gehen kann.”*

Eranos moves with the times.

(Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn)⁴

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn was the founder and the “Anima” of Eranos (FIGURE 10a, p. 234). She worked on her *opus* with total devotion. To her, Eranos represented the highlight of a journey through oriental philosophy, theosophy, different forms of meditation, the phenomenological approach to the sacred and thereafter the analytical psychology – an existential journey sustained by a love for arts and by a profound quest for spirituality. She significantly contributed to render the heuristic and “politeistic” core of the Jungian thought crucial for the Eranos experience. Nonetheless, many aspects of her personality remained impenetrable also for people close to her, such as Ximena de Angulo-Roelli⁵, who, together with her mother Cary Baynes⁶,

4 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Psychological Background of Eranos. Lecture in New York, October 1939, Club for Analytical Psychology’ (nine typescript numbered pages with underlines, annotations, and corrections by O. Fröbe-Kapteyn with crayon, 1939) (EF), 3.

5 Ximena de Angulo-Roelli (born in 1918) graduate from Bennington College and attended the Eranos meetings at least since 1936 (W. McGuire, *Bollingen – An Adventure in Collecting the Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 35). With the start of second World War, she sailed to America with her mother. She worked there for many years as “editor of the first Bollingen Foundation [see *infra*, note 52], and after its demise worked as an editor of Editions for the Armed Forces, and later as an editor of the literary quarterly *Chimera*. In 1950 she returned to Ascona and became Olga Fröbe’s assistant at Eranos, in addition to serving as a liaison with the Foundation in New York. For the home office she wrote an account of the 1950 Eranos meeting” (*ibid.*, 145). This vivid and fresh memory of the atmosphere and the various speakers of the meeting is still unpublished. She was the scriptwriter of a silent film on the Eranos *Tagung* of 1951, directed by her husband Willy Roelli and financed by the Bollingen Foundation (*ibid.*, 145). Ximena de Angulo-Roelli lives in Cavigliano (Ticino) since the end of the 1950s.

6 Cary Fink de Angulo Baynes (1883–1977), mostly noted as Cary F. Baynes from the name of her last husband Helton Godwin (Peter) Baynes, British psychiatrist and Jungian analyst, was a M.D. doctor, but never practiced as a M.D. A close friend of Olga Fröbe, she worked mainly as a translator of, among others, several of Jung’s books into English (for example: *The Secret of Golden Flower (With an European Commentary by C. G. Jung)* and, together with P. Baynes, *Modern Man in Search of the Soul, Contributions to Analytical psychology*, and Richard Wilhelm’s German version of the *I Ching* or *The Book of Changes*).

attended many Eranos meetings; Ximena de Angulo defines Olga Fröbe as “the most enigmatic person I ever knew”⁷. On the one hand, the era of her existence becomes distant and the memories of those who personally knew her become more and more precious, whilst, on the other hand, her documents, her visions and reflections as well as her correspondence gradually become available; therefore, it perhaps becomes easier to understand better the personality which inspired and animated Eranos. During her lifetime, in fact, Olga Fröbe was seen as an irreplaceable figure by those who were the most affectionate Eranos lecturers, for instance by Henry Corbin, Mircea Eliade, and Gershom Scholem⁸. “The plan for these meetings matured in a woman’s spirit”⁹, pointed out the biologist Adolf Portmann, whose debut in the meetings in 1946 contributed greatly to creating the bridge between the sciences of nature and those of spirit, following her original and profound desire¹⁰. With an extraordinary sense of sacrifice Olga Fröbe devoted all her energies to Eranos. Significantly, one speaker, who probably more than all others entered into a deep

7 Personal communication.

8 The famous scholar of Jewish mysticism wrote that the lecturers usually called her the “Great Mother”. Expressions like “*Grosse Mutter*”, “*Ehrwürdige Mutter*”, “*Liebe verehrte Urmutter*” can be found in the correspondence with Rudolf Otto and Heinrich Zimmer. Scholem felt that she represented, for the affectionate lecturers, both the “Animus” and “Anima” according to the Jungian psychology (G. Scholem, “Identifizierung und Distanz. Ein Rückblick”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 48 (1979): 463). See also H. Th. Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos. Unbekannte Begegnungen von Wissenschaft und Esoterik. Eine alternative Geistesgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bretten: Scientia nova-Neue Wissenschaft, 2001, with an upcoming English translation to be published by Equinox Pub. Ltd.), 33.

9 A. Portmann, “Vom Sinn und Auftrag der Eranos Tagungen”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 30 (1961): 7. Orig. text: “*Der Plan zu diesen Tagungen reifte im Geist einer Frau*”.

10 Adolf Portmann (1897–1982) participated in the Eranos meetings until 1977. After Olga Fröbe’s death he managed the meetings together with Rudolf Ritsema, who later assumed the presidency and devoted his life to the study and translation of the *I Ching* – see also the recapitulating and enlightening sentence in a letter of Olga Fröbe of late September 1961: “The first fifteen years were against the background of Jung’s archetypal teaching, then, after the war, twelve years against Neumann’s vision of the inner man, and now we stand at the beginning of a new phase issuing from Portmann’s idea of the union of the humanistic and natural sciences” (in W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 147).

inner rapport with her, was the German Jewish scholar – and one of the most remarkable interpret of analytical psychology – Erich Neumann, who devoted his *opus magnum* to the theme of the Great Mother¹¹.

Olga Fröbe's strong identification with Eranos requires a careful and prudent investigation into her documents her documents. In fact, a good part of her documental legacy, located in the archive of the Foundation, is set on the delicate ridge between her activity at Eranos and her personal psychological and spiritual journey – in other terms her self-analysis –, which witnesses the intimate and often dramatic relationship with her unconscious, i.e. with the impressive images that populated it. In the following pages, I will quote published and unpublished writings of Olga Fröbe in order to illustrate her exceptional personality. Furthermore, I will mainly refer to two indispensable texts for the historical understanding of Eranos: McGuire (1982) and Hakl (2001)¹². A further crucial text based on many archival sources has been recently published by R. Bernardini (2011).

11 Erich Neumann (1905–1960) was and is considered one of the most original and creative Jung followers, in Adler's words "the only one who seemed destined to build on Jung's work and to continue it" (in *ibid.*, 135 f.). At the Eranos meetings he lectured on fourteen occasions. A remarkable part of the 259 images contained in his book devoted to the *The Great Mother* comes from the Eranos Archive, for the book was originally conceived as an introduction to that Archive.

12 The first book is actually devoted to the history of the Bollingen Foundation (see also *infra*, note 52), and tells us of Eranos and of many of its protagonists thanks to ample first-hand research of the author. The second book is a crucial analysis of the *Unbekannte Begegnungen von Wissenschaft und Esoterik* ("unknown meetings of science and esotericism"), as written in the subtitle, and the most thorough reconstruction of the history of Eranos through an extremely detailed and informative work of research on its lecturers, but also on ignored or unknown figures of the meetings in Ascona. A new revised edition of this book will soon appear in English and Italian.

2. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's Perception of Analytical Psychology in her Forewords to the First Yearbooks

Olga Fröbe's relation with Jungian theory is evident in some passages of her forewords to the *Yearbooks*, which I will now examine. Her foreword to the first *Eranos Yearbook* of 1933 on "Yoga and Meditation in East and West" (*Yoga und Meditation im Osten und im Westen*) starts with these words: "Today, we all are somehow conscious of the fact that the meaningful life pointing towards understanding and synthesis can be found in all areas. This process towards consciousness [*Bewußtwerdung*] appears in all kinds of ways, according to its religious, social character or any other kind of character."¹³

Here we find the paradigmatic explanation of a main goal of Eranos, the interdisciplinarity. At the same time, we easily recognize in the reference to the *Bewußtwerdung* (process towards consciousness or becoming aware) a *Leitmotiv* of Jungian psychology¹⁴. Then she asserts: "The question of a fertile confrontation between East and West is, firstly, psychological."¹⁵ So in the field of – and in the reflection on – psyche, this confrontation is possible. The Western quest towards sense and awareness can obtain a "meaningful and complementary fecundation"¹⁶ from Oriental wisdom. Nevertheless, she specifies: "It is not the imitation of Eastern methods and teachings, or the neglect or repression of Western knowledge about these

13 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort", in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 1 (1933): 5. Orig. text: "Wir sind uns heute wohl alle bewußt, daß das sinnvolle Leben in der Richtung der Verständigung und der Synthese auf allen Gebieten liegt. Diese Bewußtwerdung tritt unter vielerlei Formen zutage, je nach ihrem religiösen, sozialen oder sonstigen Charakter."

14 See, *inter alia*, *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* (1934/54) (lecture originally held at Eranos in 1934), *The Concept of Collective Unconscious* (1936), and *Conscious, Unconscious, Individuation* (1939), in CW 9i, and *On the Nature of the Psyche* (1947/54) (lecture originally held at Eranos in 1946), in CW 8.

15 "Die Frage einer fruchtbaren Auseinandersetzung von Ost und West ist zunächst eine psychologische" (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, *op. cit.*).

16 "Sinnvolle und ergänzende Befruchtung".

things. Otherwise, Eastern wisdom, symbolism and methodology can help us to rediscover our own intimate spiritual values.”¹⁷

Without denying Olga Fröbe’s autonomous perspective, I would like to point out here that the categorical refusal of an imitation of the typical methodology of the East is a topic of the Jungian reflection regarding Oriental spirituality. Together with his deep admiration for Oriental wisdom, Jung usually maintained a cautious attitude towards the general interest for Oriental thought and for Yoga, which was spreading widely in Europe, in many cases with an appeal similar to a fashionable trend. According to Jung, the ground – the *Boden* – for a correct approach to Eastern spirituality is the awareness of the individual and collective cultural roots. For this reason, he continuously criticized systems, particularly the theosophical ones, which in his view slavishly imitated Oriental methods and technical of meditation; such wide interest for “Orientalism” in the Western world (compared by Jung with the diffusion of oriental religions and mysteries – like the Mithraism – in the Roman Empire after the political conquered of Near East) might be “a dangerous infection, but it might also be a remedy”¹⁸.

Olga Fröbe agreed with this Jungian approach and in her foreword to the *Yearbook* of the following year, dedicated to “East-Western

17 *Ibid.*, 5–6. Orig. text: “Eshandelt sich nicht um die Nachahmung östlicher Methoden und Lehren an sich, noch um die Vernachlässigung oder Verdrängung westlichen Wissens um diese Dinge, sondern darum, daß östliche Weisheit, Symbolik und Methodik uns zu einer Wiederentdeckung unserer eigenen geistigen Werte verhelfen können.” In 1939 she specifies: “Eranos wurde bisher als Begegnungsstätte für Ost und West bezeichnet, und vielleicht war diese Bezeichnung an manchen Mißverständnissen im In- und Ausland schuld. Die Eranos Tagungen befaßten sich mit östlichen und westlichen Erscheinungsformen seelischer Probleme, Wege und Lehren. Nicht aber in dem Sinne daß östliche Lehren und Methoden vom Westen nachgeahmt und übernommen werden sollten” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Vortrag”, cit., 4). That is, she goes on, a difficult task and adds: “Wer sich vom eigenen westlichen Boden wegbegibt in östliche Bereiche, unter östlicher Führung, setzt sich Gefahren aus, denen er nicht gewachsen ist” (*ibid.*).

18 C. G. Jung, *CW* 15, para 90. On Jung’s approach to oriental thought, see particularly *CW* 11, Part 2. Concerning the need to create an Occidental form of yoga and to be cautious in imitating the Oriental one see, *inter alia*, *Yoga and the West* (1936), in *CW* 11.

Symbolism and Soul Guidance" (*Ostwestliche Symbolik und Seelenführung*), she points out: "Our interest in Eastern symbolism originates from the awareness that we are naturally rooted in our own established Western symbolism, but that the Eastern symbols provide an invaluable support and fertile enrichment."¹⁹

So, the analysis of the architecture of Oriental methods concerning the spiritual direction (*östliche Seelenführung*) and Oriental symbols does not help to build something similar, but to "look for and determine" the "basic laws" (*aufsuchen und feststellen [...] die grundlegenden Gesetze*) and also to consider their possible value for the Western world; because "building the Western path to salvation must grow on Western ground, and must be elaborated with Western symbols and formed with Western material."²⁰

Olga Fröbe illustrates here the presence in the Western world of a "proper Yoga tradition", namely in the "'mystical schools' of the Gnostics, Hermetics and Pythagoreans and of the later alchemical mystical Rosicrucian traditions."²¹ This is the reason why she wished to work with specialists in Oriental studies, theologians, psychologists, mythologists, and also representatives of natural sciences. Eranos, from the start, becomes a laboratory for understanding the so-called "East in the West", according to a definition of Giovanni Filoramo²². On the other hand, Olga Fröbe detects in the Jungian psychology a modern and Western probable start of a Yoga practice,

19 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort", in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 2 (1934): 5. Orig. text: "Unsere Befassung mit der östlichen Symbolik geschieht aus dem Bewußtsein heraus, daß wir selbstredend in unserer eigenen bodenständigen westlichen Symbolik wurzeln, daß uns aber ein unschätzbares Hilfsmittel und fruchtbare Bereicherung in den Symbolen des Ostens zur Verfügung stehen."

20 Ibid., 5. Orig. text: "Der Aufbau des westlichen Heilwegs muß aus [sic] westlichem Boden herauswachsen, muß mit westlichen Symbolen arbeiten und mit westlichem Material geformt werden."

21 Ibid., 6.

22 G. Filoramo, "Picnic ad Ascona: la 'gnosi filosofica' di Eranos", in *Il risveglio della gnosi ovvero diventare dio* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1990), 25. Also Eranos, in her opinion, carries on with the Gnostic mystical school, the schools of Plato and Pythagoras, as she wrote for instance in a typescript of 1939, where she pointed out that "today psychology is gathering up all these threads and is but repeating

“a method of psychic orientation, guide and discipline that seems to have originated from the essence of the Western human being”²³. Consequently, she emphasized the purpose of analyzing “in this field” (*auf diesem Gebiet*) the “correspondences, parallelism and differences between East and West” and put them at the core of the Eranos *Tagungen*²⁴. If the hypothesis related to these parallelism between symbolic motifs and forces are confirmed, “we would have – she says – the initial stages of a way to salvation for our time, which we especially need nowadays, in the general disorientation, in the quest for new considerations of old values”²⁵. The work of the Eranos meetings would thus be “justified” (*gerechtfertigt*)²⁶.

In his extensive research on several cultural traditions, especially in the alchemical symbolism, Jung had found representations of the historical antecedents of the psychic phases of the modern process of individuation. Olga Fröbe, therefore, seriously endorsed the Jungian task concerning the parallelism between modern psychic images and the symbolic motifs present in alchemy, but also in folklore and mythology, in order to confirm and extend his quest from the empirical field of psyche to a wider horizon of interdisciplinary exchange. In her view, analytical psychology thus allows an increase of the *Bewußtwerden*, thanks to a method that is both scientific and

the ancient teaching in a modern form” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Psychological Background...”, cit., 6).

23 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 2 (1934): 6 f. [“... eine[r] Methode der seelischen Orientierung, Führung und Disziplin, die dem Wesen des westlichen Menschen entsprungen zu sein scheint”].

24 *Ibid.*, 7 [“Der Vergleich der Entsprechungen, der Parallelen und der Verschiedenheiten zwischen Ost und West auf diesem Gebiet, so wie er in den Eranos-Tagungen versucht wird, kann uns Vieles klären, und uns das nötige Gleichgewicht in der Wertung östlicher Anregungen geben”].

25 *Ibid.* [“Wenn sich diese Vermutung als begründet erweisen sollte, dann hätten wir damit die Anfänge eines Heilwegs für unsere Zeit aufgedeckt, der heute, inmitten der allgemeinen Desorientierung, des Suchens nach neuen Wertungen der alten ewigen Werte, besonders nottut”]. We find here for the first time a word, i.e., *Desorientierung* [“disorientation”], frequently related to the general condition of those times, as well as *Zersplitterung* [“fragmentation”].

26 *Ibid.*

intuitive: here we can just mention how much the Jungian quest, by its side, found in Eranos a platform of fruitful exchange and a way of development.

In fact, Eranos was not striving for an erudite search in unusual fields just for the self-pleasing pleasure of a group of scholars who liked to remain “castled” in their ivory tower. In Olga Fröbe’s foreword to the *Eranos Yearbook* of 1935, on “Occidental-Oriental direction of the Soul” (*Westöstliche Seelenführung*), we can read the following declaration on the Eranos task: “At the start of this task, there is the necessity of an acceptance [*Bejahung*] of our time as such, and simultaneously there is the question of the psychic structure of our present-day world connected to the inner structure of all times. Acceptance here expresses devotion [*Hinwendung*], and the inner willingness to recognize the creative potencies in today’s life, and to seek their origins. What is creative as well as effectively working always lies within the range of the soul, and we are aware that something is at work, a cryptic, impersonal, immense Something, which concerns every one of us. We are rooted in the collective, and therefore we cannot avoid events that are happening: we are, on the contrary, seized [*ergriffen*] by it at the deepest level of our nature. Maybe it is for this reason that the access to the inner human can therefore be found more easily than otherwise.”²⁷

Thus, closely connected with the acceptance (*Bejahung*) of the contemporary era is her *Hinwendung*, which we can translate, in this

27 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 3 (1935): 5. Orig. text: “Am Anfang dieser Aufgabe liegt die Notwendigkeit einer Bejahung unserer Zeit überhaupt, und zugleich die Frage nach der seelischen Struktur unserer heutigen Welt, in ihren Zusammenhängen mit der inneren Struktur aller Zeiten. Bejahung bedeutet hier Hinwendung, und die innere Bereitschaft, die schöpferischen Potenzen im heutigen Leben zu erkennen, und ihre Ursprünge zu suchen. Das Schöpferische, Wirkende liegt immer im Seelischen, und wir sind uns bewußt, daß heute etwas am Werke ist, ein hintergründiges, unpersönliches, immenses Etwas, das einen jeden unter uns angeht. Wir wurzeln im Kollektiven, und darum können wir uns von dem Geschehenden nicht abwenden, sondern sind davon ergriffen im Tiefsten unseres Wesens. Vielleicht ist eben darum der Zugang zum eigenen inneren Menschen leichter auffindbar als sonst.”

context, with “dedication” or “devotion”²⁸. In fact, a fundamental Eranos topic was to interpret the contemporary aspect by trying to gather the structures operating within it, reevaluating the centrality of the images – or, using a key term of the German Indologist Heinrich Zimmer, of the *Sinnbilder* (symbols, literally: images of sense)²⁹. In these words, we can recognize her conviction of a sort of transcendental guide (not) defined as an “immense Something” (*immenses Etwas*). She felt that she was at its service, and at the same time was convinced that this “Something” was able to guide and seize (*ergreifen*) the depths of the collective being. It is easy to distinguish the sacral character of her attitude toward Eranos, most likely inspired to a large extent by an interiorization of Rudolf Otto’s lessons on the *numinosum* – with its aspects of *tremendum et fascinans* – as key-word to define the religious experience in general³⁰. In her view, times seemed ripe to overcome the reductionist and positivist interpretations of symbols toward a phenomenological approach to religious experiences. Eranos therefore intends to create bridges “not only between East and West, but also between inside and outside”: in this regard, psychotherapy, a “pioneering work in a dark empire”,

28 I have preferred to use the second term in order to keep the almost religious connotation of her approach.

29 See H. Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild* (Berlin: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1926; Engl. translation: *Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred Images of India*, trans. G. Chapple and J. B. Lawson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), and Id., *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, ed. J. Campbell (Washington, DC: Bollingen Series VI, Pantheon Books, 1946). Zimmer (1890–1943) opened the first *Tagung* with a lecture about Tantra-Yoga (Zimmer 1934) and attended the Eranos symposia of 1934, 1938, and 1939 as lecturer.

30 Famous above all for his book *Das Heilige. Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (1917), the theologian and orientalist R. Otto was one the most representative initiators of a vast current of thought which aimed to revalue the centrality of the experience of the sacred and the importance of the comparative study of religious phenomena. Haki shows repeatedly the centrality of this current of thought as a source of inspiration for the whole Eranos tradition.

plays a major role³¹. Now, the psychotherapy Olga Fröbe had in mind (she also speaks of “*Seelenforschung und Seelenführung* with a scientific base”)³² evidently referred to the Jungian metapsychological system. When she describes the effort of psychical research with the help of geographical metaphors as a discovery of new psychic territories (“we are moving ahead – she will write later – in these partly undiscovered, partly sunk regions”)³³, one may also think of Eliade’s usual comparison between the discoveries of depth psychology and those of oceanography and speleology³⁴.

In Olga Fröbe’s view, the task of *Bewußtwerdung* was connected to the new discoveries in fields of physics, mathematics and philosophy and “finally, but for us at first, in psychology”³⁵. Therefore she expresses the intention to open and enlarge the Eranos quest to all sciences. In consonance with Jung, she points out that *Bewußtwerdung*

31 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 3 (1935): 6 (“*Die erste Antwort auf diese Forderung kommt von der Seite der Psychotherapie, indem sie uns den Weg der Mitte freilegt, und seine Geographie in Umrissen zeichnet. Es ist Pionierarbeit in einem dunklen Reich, und ihre Entdeckungen gehören wohl zum wichtigsten [sic] aller menschlichen Leistungen*”).

32 *Ibid.*, 7 and 8.

33 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 17 (1949): 5 (“... *tastend vorwärts in diese teils unentdeckten, teils versunkenen Regionen*”).

34 See for instance M. Eliade, “Encounters at Ascona”, in *Spiritual Disciplines. Papers from the Eranos Yearbook*, ed. J. Campbell (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1960), Vol. 4, xvii–xix; here he also writes: “... Eranos at Ascona is one of the privileged places where one is made conscious of the true dimensions of culture. Sooner or later every scholar has to face this problem and learn, from his own experience, the meaning of being ‘culturally creative’ [...]. The disciplines of the history of religions, ethnology, paleoethnology, and orientalism have seldom been regarded as *separate but interrelated* phases of a single study. It is only very recently that these disciplines have come to be thought capable of revealing human existential situations worthy of interesting not only the psychologist and sociologist but also the philosopher and theologian. It is perhaps the greatest contribution of Eranos to have stimulated and encouraged meetings and dialogues among representatives of the various sciences and disciplines whose field is the human mind and spirit [...]. The rise of Eranos coincided with the political and cultural awakening of Asia and, above all, with the entrance of exotic and primitive peoples into History” (*ibid.*, xvii f. and xix).

35 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 3 (1935): 7.

means finding the way that brings one to one's own center³⁶. This process, accompanied by the "clarification, transformation and reorganization [*Klärung, Wandlung und Neugestaltung*]", must take place "in one's own life, then, however, also in the context of the collective life"³⁷. According to her, the Eranos assignment is to set in motion the awareness (*Bewußtsein*) in the intimacy both of the individuals and of the group. In fact, individuals and groups could be an alchemical place of transformation and evolution. Again she writes: "The creative power of a group depends on its unit. It happens also in our Eranos community, whose nucleus increases from year to year. Therefore, the synthetic quality of the work is one of the most important factors and guarantees its fertility."³⁸

3. *Eranos, or Toward the Self of the Group*

At this point, it is worth noting that in these forewords to the *Yearbooks*, as in those following, Olga Fröbe does not say "I", she does not speak in the first person. That will only happen twenty (!) years later³⁹. In fact, the subject of her forewords usually focuses

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 f.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 ("im eigenen Leben, dann aber auch im Zusammenhang mit dem kollektiven Leben").

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9. Orig. text: "Die Schöpferische Potenz einer Gruppe ist von ihrer Einheit abhängig. So auch in unserer Eranos-Gemeinschaft, deren Kern von Jahr zu Jahr anwächst. Darum ist die synthetische Qualität der Arbeit einer der wichtigsten Faktoren und Garantien ihrer Fruchtbarkeit." She also writes: "Die Grundlage aller Führung liegt im Seelischen. Die Seelenführung, worauf sich unsere Arbeit bezieht, bedeutet die intimste Orientierung in der eigenen inneren Welt. Sie führt aber auch zur Orientierung in der Gruppe, in dem Bewußtsein der Gruppe" (*ibid.*, 8). On this topic see also R. Strubel, "Individuation and group", in *Money, Food, Drink, and Fashion and Analytical Training. Depth Dimensions of Psychical Existence. The Proceedings of the Eight International Congress For Analytical Psychology*, ed. J. Beebe (Fellbach-Öffingen: Adolf Bonz, 1983), 287–297.

³⁹ In the foreword to the *Eranos-Jahrbuch* of 1952, she asks whether the attitude and approach [*Haltung and Gesinnung*] of the work of Eranos can be justified and is – quoting a Chinese expression – 'in harmony with the central law of the living spirit'. Then she goes further: "As director of these meetings, I must confront these questions. It is possible to answer them only as measured by the effects originating from Eranos." Her impression is positive, and Eranos seems to be

on the sense and the assignment of the *Tagungen*, and is a “plural” one: the group of lecturers, who are gradually forming a community (*Gemeinschaft*): “In our work for Eranos – she concludes the foreword to the *Yearbook* of 1938 – we are servants of a leading Idea. Our thanks go to the lecturers who are serving this Idea together with us.”⁴⁰

Olga Fröbe frequently refers to Eranos as a circle (*Kreis*) of work and meditation in harmony with a superior center – a center that is not led by, but, on the contrary, leads the lecturers from inside. Behind this idea, it is easy to recognize the Jungian concept of *Selbst*, the dynamic factor deeply embedded in each individual and able to guide towards an integrating unity of the conflicting forces of conscious and unconscious⁴¹ and this new state of consciousness is often

effective [*wirksam*]. See the orig. text: “*Man kann sich fragen: ist die angedeutete Haltung und die Gesinnung unserer Arbeit ‘zeitgemäß’ und gerechtfertigt? Sind wir – um ein chinesisches Wort zu gebrauchen – ‘im Einklang mit dem zentralen Gesetz des lebendigen Geistes’? Ich muß, als Leiterin dieser Tagungen, diese Fragen konfrontieren. Nur an den Wirkungen, die von Eranos ausgehen, gemessen, sind die zu beantworten. Wenn ich die Leistungen von Eranos in diesen zwanzig Jahren betrachte, scheint mir, daß ich die Fragen bejahen darf. Diese Pionierarbeit ist wirksam gewesen. Ihre Wirklichkeit bezieht sich auf die äußere sowie auf mehrere Schichten der inneren Ebenen. Eranos ist in der archetypischen Welt verwurzelt. Von dorthier werden Richtung, Wesensart und allgemein-menschlicher Wert der Arbeit gesichert. Mögen die kommenden Jahre diese Wirksamkeit noch festigen*” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 21 (1952): 7 f.). She also uses the first person in her forewords to the *Yearbook* of 1955 (see *infra*, note 109).

40 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 6 (1938): 8 (“*In der Eranos-Arbeit stehen wir im Dienste einer leitenden Idee. Unser Dank gebührt den Vortragenden, die mit uns dieser Idee dienen*”). Speaking on the “preconceived pattern of Eranos” in another unpublished document on the Archive, she even declares: “Very few of the speakers are aware that they are *not free agents*” (Id., “Eranos Archive” (eleven typescript numbered pages with underlining by O. Fröbe-Kapteyn with a red crayon, 1942. This document corresponds with the section “Eranos Archive” of another document of O. Fröbe-Kapteyn with the following title: “Eranos. A survey of its history since 1933, of the facts connected with it, a. the Tagungen b. the Archive. The conclusion I have arrived at, my psychological realizations concerning it, its differences from other congress centers, and its chief problem; seventeen typescript numbered pages with underlining by O. Fröbe-Kapteyn with a red crayon, plus cover) (EF), 11).

41 See, for instance, the penetrating explanations of the Ch. 5 in the “European Commentary” to *The Secret of Golden Flower* (CW 13) and the chapter on the

represented, according to Jung, by the image of the *mandala*. She also very much liked the term *Ergriffenheit* (to be seized), which, incidentally, played a major role in Jung's as well as, for instance, in Károly Kerényi's theory.

In 1939, Olga Fröbe was asked to held conferences on Eranos in Zurich, Amsterdam, Munchen, London, and New York (by the way she used the first person, as in other documents preserved in today's Archive). In the text of her conference we can read that, for her, to be a servant of Eranos was basically a twofold approach: the awareness of the law of the group, and the impersonal dedication or devotion to this law. She compared the attempt to follow the inner law of the individual to the one of a Group (or "what today in America is called 'Team work'") and pointed out that any opposition to such law – both at an individual and social level – causes disharmony, and the rise of destructive forces instead of unity⁴². Then she carries on: "So, what does it mean to recognize and live this interior law? Firstly, it seems to me to involve a certain degree of impersonal dedication to work. Secondly, a sense for 'the rules of the game'. Thirdly, solidarity must stay open-hearted and generous, without degenerating into a clique. I know how difficult it is to stick to these three rules – I also know how many actual organizations have failed to do so."⁴³

"Self" in *Aion* (CW 9ii).

42 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag", cit., 11 ("Sowie es sich im einzelnen Menschenleben darum handelt, das eigene zentrale Gesetze zu erkennen und sich ihm unterzuordnen, so [verhält es sich, translator addition] auch in der Gruppe. Das ist der eigentliche Sinn von dem, was heute in Amerika 'Team work' genannt wird, und fast zum Slogan geworden ist. Es bedeutet diesen Sinn für das Gesetz der Gruppe oder der Gemeinschaft"). If a single person or a group sins [versündigt] against its own law, "zerfällt die Gemeinschaft, treten zerstörende Kräfte ein, entsteht Verwirrung und Auflösung. Wo das Gesetz gefühlt und gelebt wird, entsteht die Einheit, das Ineinanderspielen gegensätzlicher Kräfte gegensätzlichen Kräfte, und daraus das Schöpferische, [das] Lebendige" (ibid.).

43 Ibid. Orig. text: "Was heißt also dieses innere Gesetz der Gruppe erkennen und leben? Mir scheint primär einen bestimmten Grad unpersönlicher Hingabe an das Werk. Zweitens einen Sinn 'for the rules of the Game' [sic]. Drittens eine Solidarität, die weitherzig und großzügig bleiben muß, ohne in einer Klique auszuarten. Ich weiß wie schwer es ist, nur diese drei Regeln einzuhalten, ich weiß auch wieviele Organisationen von heute daran gescheitert sind."

In this passage we can recognize her fear of becoming stereotype, and her profound wish to be in touch with the unique and incomparable – so we can assume, transcendental – nature of Eranos. Her responsibility required an ability to be receptive, to capture the subtle forces operating on another level. In the following years and after the difficult war years, she apparently felt herself more reassured about an autonomous force leading Eranos and felt encouraged to continue her task thanks to the speakers' appreciation, as well as Jung's regular attendance at the meetings. Moreover, the continuity of Eranos brought a confirmation of the rightness of her attitude toward the common law of the community. In 1951, for instance, she wrote: "We are all at the service of the indestructible, whether we know it or not; here is the obligation, responsibility and ethos of our time. To accept this service brings about to a large extent the quality and substance of the culture renewing itself."⁴⁴

However, it seems that 1939, which was the seventh birthday of Eranos and also marked the start of the second World War, was a year of deep reflection for Olga Fröbe. In a typescript of that year with the title *The Psychological Background of Eranos*, we find further elements illustrating her approach to the "interior law" of Eranos. Firstly, she mentions the beginning of her "fatal" relationship: "Originally, twelve years ago, it seized upon myself, and I became its servant."⁴⁵ She refers to 1927, the year in which she had the idea of the conference room, after a long period of solitude and meditation. Then she explains: "I have watched this building process for many years, accepting its unseen conductor and the law that governs its movements. The irrational plays a big part in this method of organization, and it often looks irresponsible. Yet the responsibility is *merely shifted*

44 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort", in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 20 (1951): 7 ("Wir stehen alle im Dienste des Unzerstörbaren, ob wir es wissen oder nicht, und hier liegt Verpflichtung, Verantwortung und Ethos unserer Zeit. Das Annehmen dieses Dienstes bedingt in weitem Maße die Qualität und die Substanz der sich erneuernden Kultur").

45 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The Psychological Background...", cit., 8.

to another level, and is a more powerful reality than any personal mode of action could be. I have found that we must keep in touch with that reality, and that I have to watch the signs very carefully so as not to diverge from it. Any personal intent, plan or purpose must be surrendered. That excludes the personal will entirely, and means a complete submission to the greater impersonal Will. We all know what that implies, even whilst we are unable to continually comply with it: it means that here the problem of the Self comes in, and not only the individual Self, but the Self of a group. Organization then becomes a living reality, a constant readjustment to the direction of the undercurrent, a close attention to the signals and happenings in the outer world. I doubt whether any scientific group in the world except Eranos managed along these lines.”⁴⁶

Eranos was undoubtedly at the core of Olga Fröbe’s thought; she was both receptive to the feedback of the speakers and continuously reflecting on its inner and dynamic sense, which expresses something beyond her and the speakers. She felt that this “entity” resounded in her own and in their inner depth: “In the sense that all outer happenings are a reflection, as in a mirror, of an inner reality, Eranos *reflects something that already exists* in the inner world.”⁴⁷ Evidently, her reflection was permeated with spiritual approach through which she experienced Jungian thought, and his concept of the process of individuation: hence the lack of clear boundaries in her process individuation and that of the Eranos project, and she was aware of that.

4. The Eranos Archive: Looking into the Past toward a New Consciousness

I continue now by taking a look to at the nearness of Olga Fröbe’s concept of Eranos to analytical psychology. If we go back to the foreword of the *Yearbook* on “The Formation and idea of salvation

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 f.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

in East and West” (*Gestaltung und Erlösungsidee in Ost und West*), of the year 1936, we see how she praises the “modern psychotherapeutic research”, because it has the depth to rediscover the fact (*Tatsache*) that the human being is “the gate and access to the inner world” (*Tor und Zugang zu der inneren Welt*): with the help of oriental studies, theology, history of art, it collected “a fullness of comparisons. Symbolism and mythology are the common property of these different researches, and studying these sources belongs to the task of the Eranos *Tagungen*. It seems that from this groundwork originates an extensive science of the soul, the scope of which we still cannot encompass at all”⁴⁸.

Furthermore, she observes: “It is not the history of culture the expansion of human consciousness?”⁴⁹ Therefore, to collect the “archetypal” traces of human culture to her means understanding the nature of the human being in a global way, beyond its particular definitions, in search of its deep and transcendental nature, of the so-called “Adam Kadmon”. Such “psycho-historical” traces are not accidental, rather pieces of a greater mosaic of the human soul. At the same time, Olga Fröbe interprets this search for the traces of ancient cultures through a unifying perspective, beyond the sectarian approach of sciences, in an attempt to create – and at the same time

48 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 4 (1936): 7. [“... eine Fülle von Vergleichsmaterial. Das Gemeingut dieser verschiedenen Forschungen ist die Symbolik und die Mythologie, und das Studium dieser Quellen gehört zu der Aufgabe der Eranos Tagungen. Es hat den Anschein als ob aus dieser Vorarbeit eine umfassende Wissenschaft der Seele im Entstehen wäre, deren Umfang wir noch gar nicht übersehen können”].

49 Ibid. Orig. text: “Was ist Kulturgeschichte anders als die Geschichte der Erweiterung des menschlichen Bewußtseins?” We find the same subject in her *Eranos Vortrag* (cit., 3) as well as in *The psychological background of Eranos*: “Scientific research of the past fifty years has laid bare the entrance to a vast archive of human records, architectural and pictorial remains of ancient civilizations, fragment of the scriptures of many people – a treasure house of symbolic values, of which the extent cannot even be surmised. These researches have built a bridge between our times and the past, between the man of today and man of past ages, and have made a relationship between these possible” (Id., “The Psychological Background...”, cit., 3). Cfr. also *infra*, note 98.

re-discover – their interconnected meaning (a superior, synthetic meaning, which seems opposed to – or a sort of redemption of – the *Geworfenheit*, the condition, according to Heidegger, of the human being into the world): “Mankind’s entire tradition forms an immense archive of symbolic material of this type. It is our task to approach this archive from a new perspective by putting human experience at the center of our researches more and more.”⁵⁰

Here we can perceive an echo – but also the theoretical justification – of Olga Fröbe’s search in several libraries and archives in order to collect a pictorial archive of cultural-historical and artistic images representing symbolic, ritualistic and mythological visual images of many different epochs, cultural, and religious traditions, and from all over the world⁵¹. Thanks to her trips during the 1930s and the first years of the 1940s especially to Paris, London, Rome, Berlin, Munich, Athens, and New York, she was able to compile a collection of ca. 6000 images of archeology, fine art, sacred architecture, etc., which exemplified in her eyes the living expressions of archetypes in the history of mankind. The “Eranos Archive for symbolic research”⁵² became a source of inspiration and work for scholars like Neumann, Kerényi, Eliade, and Jung himself, who first entrusted her in 1935 to start the research for his alchemical studies. This research was mostly

50 *Ibid.*, 8. Orig. text: “Die gesamte Überlieferung der Menschheit bildet ein ungeheures Archiv symbolischen Materials dieser Art. Es ist unsere Aufgabe von einer neuen Seite an dieses Archiv heranzugehen, indem wir das menschliche Erlebnis immer mehr in das Zentrum unserer Untersuchungen rücken.” The conclusion of the foreword is optimistic and permeated with astrological allusions: she felt that “our time is a birth-giving time [*Unsere Zeit ist eine gebärende Zeit*]” and declared: “We are in a regeneration process between two wordly periods, between two zodiac signs [*Wir stehen im Regenerationsprozess zwischen zwei Welt-Perioden, zwischen zwei Tierkreiszeichen*]” (*ibid.*, 9).

51 W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 28 f.; A. Jaffé, “C. G. Jung und die Eranos-Tagungen”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 44 (1975): 11.

52 “Or – as she wrote – for the study of archetypes in their various aspects of images, texts, dreams, visions etc. [...] As such it is the first research institute of its kind” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Archive”, *cit.*, 8). This unpublished script, written before the Eranos meeting of 1942, presents a kind of schematic memo and a reflection in form of *work in progress* on the history and on the meaning of the Eranos Archive. See also W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 28 f. and 37 f.

supported, on Jung's initiative, by the Swiss Federal Institute (ETH) in Zurich and by Mary and Paul Mellon⁵³. The leading idea of the Eranos foundress soon became that of combining the lectures with images related to their central themes⁵⁴. Consequently, a pictorial exhibition in 1938 devoted to the Great Mother, the theme of the *Tagung*, was so successful that it was transferred to the Analytical Psychology Club in New York⁵⁵. In a script on the Eranos Archive she noted: "In this way Eranos *first appeared in America in its pictorial aspect*."⁵⁶

This syncretistic and pioneering sensitivity was a characteristic feature of her personality. A sensitivity that one can already recognize in the idea she had for a lecture devoted to the significance of Lotus in 1930, at the "Summer School" of the "Center for Spiritual Research",

53 See also H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, Ch. 10. Mary Conover Mellon, an American lady very close to Olga Fröbe's vision, together with her husband, the industrial multimillionaire Paul Mellon, gave important financial support to Eranos and to Olga Fröbe herself. Gifted with an extraordinary sensitivity for fine art and attracted to Jungian psychology, she founded in 1942 the *Bollingen Foundation*, named after Jung's tower in Bollingen, which supported the researches of many scholars at Eranos. In the *Bollingen Series* were published not only a selection of papers from the Eranos Yearbooks and translations of Jung's work, but also valuable works on philosophy, poetry, archeology, literature and history of art. "The Bollingen Fondation" – Jung wrote in 1954 – "must be an unusual exception in the United States. I get the impression of a small island in an infinite sea of misunderstanding and flatness" (in W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 128). In a "kind of private testament", Olga Fröbe wrote: "She [Mary Mellon], Jung, and I were in the identical pattern, energized by the same Power and thereby bound up with each other" (in *ibid.*, 27). See also W. Schoenl, C. G. Jung: *His Friendships with Mary Mellon and J. B. Priestley* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1998).

54 As testified by some photos in the today's Eranos Archive. See also G. P. Quaglini, A. Romano & R. Bernardini (eds.), *Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933-1952* (Torino: Antigone, 2007), 78 and 133–141.

55 "War or no war, Olga Fröbe, with a gift of a thousand Swiss francs from the Mellons, sailed to New York in October 1939, accompanied by Cary Baynes. She brought an enlarged exhibition of some three hundred 'Great Mother' pictures for display at the Analytical Psychology Club, and she lectured on the pictures and on Eranos, which she now planned to transfer to America if the Nazis took Switzerland" (W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 32).

56 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Archive", *cit.*, 7. "The reaction of the audience and of the speakers proved that the *presentation of archetypal ideas in images and in verbal form together* was evidently most convincing" (*ibid.*, 8).

namely to decorate the conference room with lotus flowers. So it is possible to see that Olga Fröbe's well-known refusal of the typical academic, "cold" approach to the themes – and simultaneously, as Gershom Scholem remembers, her desire for "*ergriffene*" lecturers at the *Tagungen* –, was in fact an aspect of her attempt to create a new access to the depth levels through the combined force of words and images.

Her plan for an Archive of archetypal images was indeed very ambitious and demanded a lot of energy. Today, in times of internet research and easy intercontinental trips, it appears even more extraordinary to think of the passion that led this woman around the world in search of ancient images. In 1938, before visiting the Apostolic Library of the Vatican, she wrote to Mary Mellon: "I feel as if I were going into the unknown, because this cruise into the territory of the Magna Mater, where all cults were alive, is a different thing from getting the images from Northern museums. I am going to collect every archetypal representation I can find [...] the Crucifixion, the Baptism, the Descent into Hell, the Resurrection, the fight with the Dragon..."⁵⁷

Here we can see how Olga Fröbe was "*ergriffen*" by that task, which she considered a follow-up on that of Jung. This burning passion was not unproblematic for her, extremely identified with her role of "mother" and "soul" of Eranos, in the continuous attempt to "perceive" and orchestrate the "inner energies" of Eranos.

However, I now would like to focus on the closeness of her idea of collecting these pictorial testimonies to the Jungian concept of parallelism between the cultural history of humanity and the psychic history of the single individual⁵⁸. In an already mentioned document

⁵⁷ In W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 29 f.

⁵⁸ The connection between ontogeny and phylogeneny and the idea that the first recapitulated the second was theorized particularly by the German biologist and philosopher Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) and later influenced – together with the lamarckian theory of the inheritance of the acquired characteristics – also the dynamic psychiatry and the deep psychology. In the Jungian hypothesis of the collective unconscious we can recognize a(n) (re-)interpretation, if not a form of

of 1942 on the “Eranos Archive”, Olga Fröbe’s deep desire to “serve” Jungian psychology can be manifestly recognized. Indeed, she underlines the importance of the work for the archive for psychology and adds: “Its *value as a scientific proof of C. G. Jung’s concept of the Collective Unconscious* is equally clear. If archetypes can be traced from their source in earliest cultures, through the centuries to their manifestation of today, in their transformation and variations, as they already can be traced in the material of the Eranos Archives, then the *Archive will be able* to continue and extend C. G. Jung’s work in this sense.”⁵⁹

It is worth stressing here Olga Fröbe’s independent approach: she recognized in the analytical psychology a means to open the perspective of modern man and she wished to contribute to the spiritual development through the work of Eranos. In this respect, we can briefly observe how her aim was in harmony with the core of the successive crucial quest of Erich Neumann, who intensely devoted himself to the study of the development of the consciousness in cultural history⁶⁰.

development, of that idea. The significance of Haeckel’s theories and theories of memory for analytical psychology is thematized by S. Shamdasani, *Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology. The Dream of a Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 182–189 *et passim*; see also, on Jung and Portmann, *ibid.*, 263–267.

59 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Archive”, cit., 9. And further: “The basis of an Institute for the study of manifestation of the Collective Unconscious already exists. If in the next 10 years this work can be continued, and supervised from time to time by C. G. Jung himself, then this continuation of his work in the future will be ensured” (*ibid.*).

60 See for instance E. Neumann, *Ursprungsgeschichte des Bewußtseins* (Zürich: Rascher, 1949; English trans.: *The History of the Origin of Consciousness* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XLII, 1954)) and its preface by Jung.

5. Eranos as “Expression” and “Extension” of Analytical Psychology

Eranos undoubtedly represents a particular expression of its time as well as, in many respects, a new expression of an interdisciplinary task. At the same time, for reasons I tried to explain above, Eranos can be seen as an application and an amplification of the psychological and spiritual quest Jung himself was involved in. This fact is recognizable also in the increasing assimilation of Jungian thought during the *Tagungen*, as Ximena de Angulo observed when she returned to Ascona after the war: “What struck her after being absent since 1939 – writes McGuire – was that all the lecturers seem to take the concept of the archetypes for granted. Scarcely a speaker did not refer in this connection to Jung by name. Formerly, the wealth of [lecture] material tended to provide empirical evidence for the existence of archetypal images; today, the speakers take the existence of such images for their point of departure [...]. This acceptance of the theory of the collective unconscious advances the fundamental purpose of Eranos in unifying the various branches of learning into one comprehensive science of man.”⁶¹

Archetype, collective unconscious, and individuation as structural *Leitmotive* of analytical psychology gradually became a crucial touchstone for the comparative analysis of the Eranos collegial work. This fact can be attributed not only to the positive disposition of many speakers towards the heuristic connotation of Jungian ideas, but also to Olga Fröbe’s appreciation for Jungian psychology and her personal involvement in it. I shall now try to further focus on this point, particularly on the basis of some passages from unpublished documents.

61 W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 145. She wrote similar things in her unpublished script “Eranos 1950”.

5.1 Olga Fröbe and the (Late) Discovery of Analytical Psychology

The discovery of analytical psychology happened relatively late in Olga Fröbe's spiritual journey. As I already mentioned above, she came to the Eranos idea after an intensive period of study and meditation. She used to say that, after her arrival in Ascona in 1920, she had lived in almost total seclusion and solitude for seven years, devoting herself to the study of Oriental thought and to various forms of meditation⁶². It seems that this phase was necessary for her in order to mature, and to enlarge her individual quest for a collective dimension of search, i.e. within a group of scholars. Subsequently, in 1927, she was inspired to build a conference room, which was realized in the following year. Then, together with the theosophist Alice Ann Bailey, she began to lead a "School of Spiritual Research" under the auspices of the "Arcane School" in New York and, between 1930 and 1932, she organized conferences and practical sessions on spiritual and esoteric themes⁶³.

The conference Olga Fröbe held in 1939 reveals, among other things, two interesting facts: the inspiration for building the conference room in the garden of her "Casa Gabriella" came during a sort of meditation which she used to have while creating her particular geometric "symbolic-occultist" paintings⁶⁴. Furthermore, she points out that the disciplines represented in the Eranos *Tagungen* at that time (therefore in its sixth year of life) corresponded to her former interests, however, "with the exception of psychology"⁶⁵. Olga Fröbe's

62 She called this period her "seven years of discipline of concentration" [*siebenjährige Konzentrationsdisziplin*].

63 See H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, Ch. 3.3.

64 We can just mention here the importance for her of these "pictures of meditation" mainly painted during the 1920s and early 1930s, and recognize a possible *fil rouge* between these paintings and the "mandalas of Eranos" which we will talk about later.

65 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag", cit., 1. "Die Entstehung von Eranos geht auf das Jahr 1927 zurück, und zwar auf eine Stunde, in der ich mit einer geometrischen Zeichnung beschäftigt war, – einer aus der Serie von etwa zweihundert, die einige von Ihnen bekannt ist. In diesem Zustand, (also in jenem Zustand, in dem man solche Zeichnungen macht), kam mir der Einfall einen Saal im Garten zu bauen,

approach to psychology seems to correspond in preponderant – or perhaps exclusive – measure with Jungian psychology. After her first encounter with Jung in 1930⁶⁶, she scheduled a psychological meeting for that year and invited him to lecture on the alchemical work *Secret of the Golden Flower*. However Jung refused to participate on this and on two other occasions, and finally appeared in Ascona at the first Eranos meeting in 1933⁶⁷.

From 1932 onwards, whilst discovering psychology, Olga Fröbe was convinced that it was important to gather scholars of higher academic and scientific level – this was in line with her detachment from theosophical thought or at least from Alice Bailey⁶⁸. In 1934, according to her own words, she realized the importance of analytical psychology at the core of Eranos⁶⁹.

The personal relationship between Carl Gustav Jung and Olga

und Tagungen zu organisieren im Anschluß an die Studien, die ich seit Jahren schon machte. Diese Studien umfaßten so ziemlich jene Forschungsgebiete, die jetzt in den Eranos Tagungen vertreten sind, mit Ausnahme der Psychologie. Im Jahre 1928 wurde der Saal gebaut, und in 1929 bereitete ich die erste Tagung vor. Eine kurze Reise nach Amerika brachte mir die ersten Mitarbeiter und die Tagungen von 1930, 1931 und 1932 verliefen mehr oder weniger unter amerikanischer und englischer Flagge. Einige Hindus, ein Russe, ein Irländer, zwei Italiener kamen dazu."

66 According to a generally accepted version, this happened at the "School of Wisdom" of Graf Hermann Keyserling in Darmstadt. See W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 24 and H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, 52 ff.

67 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, *op. cit.*, 2. The crucial "Europäischer Kommentar" to the R. Wilhelm's German translation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower* has been published in 1929 (CW 13).

68 Alice Bailey was in fact against Olga Fröbe's new tendency to invite "German professors" – the first to whom Olga Fröbe wrote was Heinrich Zimmer. By the way, it was not a complete break-away with theosophy, as shown by some later notes in Eliade's diary on the 'theosophical atmosphere' of the meetings and on her ongoing interest in theosophical and occultist literature (see for instance M. Eliade, *Fragments d'un journal* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), August 21, 1950 and June 1952).

69 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, *op. cit.*, 8. "Es ist mir seither [1934, translator addition] deutlich geworden, daß nur der Kontakt mit der analytischen Psychologie es dem Einzelnen möglich machte, seine Krise innerlich zu tragen, wenn auch nicht sich gründlich mit ihr auseinanderzusetzen." Here she expressly accompanied psychology with the adjective "analytische" ("analytic"), therefore intending Jungian psychology. Nevertheless, in February 1934 she still had some theoretical reservations

Fröbe was not unproblematic, as can be expected with two such strong-willed personalities: she was not his patient⁷⁰ and even described the relationship as a battle⁷¹. Nevertheless, it was characterized by deep mutual gratitude. Jung was directly involved in the composition of the programs and considered Eranos an irreplaceable basis for spiritual exchange. In 1936, following an explicit request of her, he addressed a circular letter to all analytical psychology clubs (at the time in Zurich, Basel, Berlin, Paris, London, and New York) encouraging their members to attend the *Tagungen*⁷². Olga Fröbe carefully recorded this fact and felt increasingly convinced of the intimate connection between Eranos and analytical psychology.

concerning the Jungian psychology, as she wrote to F. Heiler (see H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, 171).

70 See W. McGuire: "She was never, formally speaking, an analysand, and yet it seemed that she was perpetually Jung's analysand. Her relationship to Jung and the opposing facets of her personality were observed by an American living in Switzerland during World War II, Mary Bancroft. 'Mrs. Fröbe was walking along the road to Ascona with Jung. Walking, talking, talking – and Jung was clumping along beside her, smoking his pipe, and *listening*. She was dressed as always – large hat, loose garment too long to be fashionable, and around her neck chains or beads of 'things' of esoteric significance. I got the impression that she was in possession of some mysterious talisman – and Jung in a way was *it* – the talisman. It always seemed to me so odd that she could do anything – organize anything. She struck me as one of those people who float through life an inch or two off the ground. And yet I realized she had to be enormously efficient to organize those conferences'" (W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 27–28. See also H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, 52, n. 87).

71 A. Jaffé, *op. cit.*, 12 and O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Erster Abend" (five typescript numbered pages with crayon annotations of O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, attached to the Eranos mandala drawings, 1947–1948) (EF), 1: "*Man könnte es eigentlich eher einen Kampf als eine Beziehung nennen.*" In this document she also tried to recognize the strength of her projections on him, as well as on another crucial male figure for her, E. Neumann. Olga Fröbe did not have a passive attitude towards him, as has been said of most of his female patients (see N. Neri, *Oltre l'Ombra. Donne intorno a Jung* (Roma: Borla, 1995), Ch. 10 and 188 f.).

72 Here he wrote: "The Eranos Tagung offers something quite unique today because it is really the only European platform where questions concerning humanity as a whole are discussed by representatives from the different countries" (Jung, circular letter of June 11, 1936).

5.2 The “Psychological Core” of Eranos

In the already mentioned document about the Eranos Archive, Olga Fröbe points out: “Studying the groundplan of Eranos, we cannot avoid seeing, that from the very beginning the *central zone* was occupied by the youngest *science of psychology*, surrounded as it were, by a circle of research departments, until then strictly isolated by academic tradition, and now brought into relationship with each other by the single subject of the respective meetings, which all were handling, and by the invisible actions of psychological laws, set in motion by the work of the central zone.”⁷³

Then she affirms: “*This central position of psychology*, which has never varied, is the reason of C. G. Jung’s collaboration at *every Tagung*. For the invisible purpose of Eranos, it was evident and absolutely essential that the principle for which Jung stands, and the *powers of integration which characterize it*, should hold the group of research departments together.”⁷⁴

In these powers of integration” it is possible to recognize into which direction psychology, this young science, was going, and that it would stay at the core of Eranos. She further adds: “Eranos was definitely placed at the service of that principle which C. G. Jung represented (*not* at his personal service). This was done because it was plain [to see] that one identical force was manifested in *his* work and in the Eranos work. Behind the scene these were united.”⁷⁵

We see how frequently this fact of her “service” appears in her writings: service to Eranos, to analytical psychology, to something impalpable, which was beginning to take shape in the work of a group of scholars gathering freely each year. She devoted her life to that and, in an indirect way, to Jungian psychology, because she recognized that it was an instrument that fitted the Western world

⁷³ O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Archive”, cit., 13 f.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*. Further she writes: “At the time Jung said: ‘there are *two* Eranos, one in Ascona and one in Küsnacht’. That confirmed the step taken” (*ibid.*).

and was able to reach the most profound resources of man – in other words, an answer to contemporary needs. “Behind the scenes”, she wrote, there was an “inner affinity”, making Eranos inseparable from psychology⁷⁶.

Analytical psychology meant several things to Olga Fröbe. In theory, Olga Fröbe recognized in it a deeper relation with the empirical research which, for instance, theosophy did not have and in practice, she found an invaluable help for the resolution of psychic crises. In her view, both aspects were elements for developing awareness in the Western psyche. Therefore, she saw in analytical psychology a secret unifying force and reconciling factor of different disciplines and various speakers. In a document of 1939 with the title *The Psychological Background of Eranos*, we can read: “The work of C. G. Jung, although never especially emphasized, *represents the synthetic force at the heart of Eranos*. It works, we might say, underground, invisibly, yet it holds the whole together and embodies the real significance of these meetings. It establishes a network of relationships between the different fields of research, between the speakers and between all members of the conferences, whether they are aware of it or not.”⁷⁷

It was not important whether they themselves were aware of this and to what degree; she herself was. Analytical psychology operates as a secret force, and this force was evidently fundamental because it was the force that permitted a creative interdisciplinarity. She was definitely convinced that “the same archetypal idea is activating both C. G. Jung’s teaching of individuation as well as the Eranos work”⁷⁸.

Olga Fröbe underlines the lack of pre-arranged planning on the one hand, and the pre-existence of each Eranos program on the

76 In a list of characteristic of Eranos, she writes among other things: “The life of Eranos is inseparable from the central science of psychology” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Archive”, cit., 16).

77 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Psychological Background...”, 4.

78 *Ibid.*, 6. “That explains Jung’s close cooperation with Eranos in the last seven years” (*ibid.*).

other; she felt that the Eranos quest was, in terms of Jungian psychology, the journey of a group individuation⁷⁹.

5.3. The Dictator: Eranos as a Living Archetype

A listener of the musical energies – as she wrote – for the alchemical *opus* of Eranos, perceiving her role as a servant to a higher reality, Olga Fröbe's devotion to Eranos was not without some problematic aspects. In a Jungian perspective, she lived and suffered under the power of the archetype she was working for. Her belief that Eranos was an autonomous archetypal strength was not an intellectual one, and required all her forces. She was constantly thinking about the task and the sense of Eranos, and its conformity with the times. In *The psychological background of Eranos*, she presents an overview on Eranos in the form of the story of “an archetype that gripped me some twelve years ago [in 1927], and with which I was identified for a long time, as anyone has to be, who carries through a piece of work of this kind. It is a story of possession, identification, and at least partial non-identification, or I should not be telling it”⁸⁰.

This story started when she became its “servant”, as we saw above, in 1927. Far from wanting to dwell on this problem, I wish to simply underline how Olga Fröbe really *experienced* Eranos as an archetype: she lived it, if we can say, “underneath her own skin”, with all its richness and all its difficulties, with its good and bad sides. Aware of the

79 “The background of Eranos is linked up with the entire collective unconscious” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, *op. cit.*, 2). In this document she also wrote: “If we compare the subject of each congress since 1933, it becomes clear that there is a *continuity* running through them. When we started in 1933 with the subject of Yoga and Meditation in East and West, no-one, including myself, had any idea where that subject was going to lead us. And yet in that first conference the archetypal idea of Eranos was clearly visible as the *Idea of the Quest* or the Way of Man, the Middle Way or the Way of Individuation, and the methods of approach to that Way in East and West” (*ibid.*). And further: “We had, and we have, no program, that is, we never have a plan of the ground we intend to cover, nor a pattern to which we intend to stick to. *That Pattern* exists somewhere beyond space and time, just as the pattern of an individual life is pre-existent to the birth of a human being” (*ibid.*, 3).

80 *Ibid.*, 1.

dangers of such a deep identification, Jung continually feared that she would fall prey to the collective unconscious, as it appears in some of his letters to her where he warned her not to identify too much with her work, and as Ximena de Angulo also remembers⁸¹. By the way, her strong identification with archetypal images could have been one of the factors which later made her decide to donate the entire pictorial Archive to the Warburg Institute in London⁸².

When we continue to read this document of 1939, we can find quite an unusual passage on Eranos which shows clearly how difficult her relationship with its archetypal bipolarity was – particularly in this fatal year: “In English one often says: to enter into the spirit of

81 Personal communication. In the correspondence between Jung and Olga Fröbe, we repeatedly find the terms “*identisch*” too. There it appears that her psychical involvement with archetypal images caused serious problems of insomnia – indeed, she kept the collection of images in her bedroom. In a letter of 20th September 1937, Jung suggested that she should go on vacation “anywhere” [irgendwohin] in order to have a break; he also observed that “Archetypes never sleep, because they are identical with the river of life which flows within us even when we are asleep” (*Archetypen schlafen nie, denn sie sind identisch mit dem Strom des Lebens, der in uns fließt, auch wenn wir schlafen*).

82 That happened in 1956; duplicates of the Archive went to the Jung Institute in Küsnacht-Zurich and to the Bollingen Foundation in New York (W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 144). Before the Bollingen Foundation closed, the collection was transferred in 1969 to the Jung Foundation in New York and the present “Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism” (ARAS) was created, which today, in addition to the images of Eranos archive, contains altogether about 17,000 photographic images, each cross-indexed, individually mounted, and accompanied by scholarly commentary collected over a 60-year period. Two remarkable publications (B. Moon (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism. The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism. Volume 1* (Boston, MA-London Shambala Publications, Inc., 1991), and G. Elder (ed.), *An Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism. The Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism. Volume 2. The Body* (Boston, MA-London Shambala Publications, Inc., 1996) together with the recent one *The Book of Symbols* (Köln: Taschen, 2010) demonstrate the underlying concept of archetypal images. According to Ami Ronnberg, the curator of ARAS, the first volume of the *Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism* also offers a good introduction to the history and meaning of ARAS, written by Joseph H. Henderson and Charles H. Taylor (in B. Moon, *op. cit.*, 1991). See also the informative homepage of the digitized archive at www.aras.org. For a detailed reconstruction of the history of the Eranos Archive and its donation to the Warburg Institute, see also R. Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos. Il progetto della psicologia complessa* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011), Ch. 3.

something, or to enter into the spirit of a game or of an undertaking, etc. The spirit of Eranos is an inexorable dictator. Those who serve such a one know it. He won't loosen his grip, he has time. This means, time does not play a role, it is beyond his sphere. His perseverance is of a quality that only archetypes possess. He is tiring, but he also gives energy, and only this fact explains our ability to bear it and to go ahead with it. It is directed at Man, it focuses on Man above all, puts the human aspect at the center, and repeatedly highlights his process towards consciousness [*Bewußtwerdung*]. It is the 'Force Majeure' that renders my organizing activity so extremely difficult, that destroys so many things I laboriously construct, that handles the program so pitilessly. On the other hand, it is constructive, it draws and traces the boundaries of form which I must grasp and carry out like an antenna."⁸³

83 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag", cit., 9. Orig. text: "Kommen wir noch einmal auf den Archetypus zurück. Vielleicht können wir ihn auch den Geist von Eranos nennen? Im Englischen sagt man oft: to enter into the spirit of a thing, of a game, of an undertaking usw. Der Eranos Geist ist ein unerbittlicher Diktator. Wer je einem solchen diene, weiß das. Er läßt nicht locker, er hat Zeit. Das heißt, Zeit spielt für ihn keine Rolle, ist außerhalb seines Bereichs. Seine Ausdauer ist von der Qualität, die eben nur Archetypen besitzen. Er strengt an, gibt aber von seiner Energie, und nur diese Tatsache erklärt unsere Fähigkeit, ihn zu ertragen und mitzugehen. Er ist auf den Menschen gerichtet, meint vor allem anderen den Menschen, drängt das Menschliche in den Vordergrund, betont seine Bewußtwerdung immer wieder. Er ist die 'Force Majeure' die mir das Organisieren so ungeheuer schwer macht, so vieles zerstört was ich mühselig aufbaue, so unbarmherzig mit dem Programm umgeht. Andererseits ist er konstruktiv, entwirft, zieht die Konturen der Form, die ich als Antenne auffangen und verwirklichen muß. Da ich aber die Rolle einer Antenne spiele, bin ich mir bewußt daß ich seine Korrekturen annehmen muß, wenn auch nicht kritiklos. Eranos bewegt sich in einer bestimmten Richtung, unter einem bestimmten Gesetz. Wenn ich diese Richtung unterbreche, davon abweiche, oder gegen das Gesetz verstoße durch zu willkürliches handeln, dann muß ich es mir gefallen lassen, ziemlich schonungslos korrigiert zu werden."

5.4 Further Definitions in the Following Years: The Representation-Play around the Center

Olga Fröbe pointed out that every description of Eranos escapes rational understanding because of its dynamic, intangible, and transcendent nature – a nature that manifests itself like music to her. With time she repeatedly underlines the “continuity” of Eranos, a fact which seemed to confirm to her the meaning of her work and strengthens her trust in it – and probably helped her to face the difficulties linked to it. She used to see the actual origin of Eranos in 1933, when her spiritual and cultural project took a new scientific character, Jung’s involvement finally started, and Daniel Brody of the publisher home “Rhein” began with the publication of the *Eranos-Jahrbücher*. She considered not an accident that its actual beginning happened in that fatal year, and was accustomed to see Eranos as an “army of constructive forces”⁸⁴. Even in the obscure period of the Second World War, she felt Eranos was “one of the few peaceful islands of culture of this time”⁸⁵. During this time it was essential for her to keep the ritual of the annual Eranos meetings alive, even if only a few participants were able to attend⁸⁶.

In Olga Fröbe’s mind, the center is an Eranos’ *Leitmotiv*. Empty or occupied by an indefinable, secret driving force, the center is dynamic, creative, and operating intransigently. It is towards this

84 W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 24. She points out: “The commencement of Eranos in the year 1933, at the same time that Hitler came into power, is a fact that must not be overlooked. It is clear to me, and perhaps to a few others, that Eranos belongs to the *army of constructive forces*, as over against the destructive ones which seem to be ruling the world, and that it is one of the first visible signs that the former are beginning to stir” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Archive”, *cit.*, 15).

85 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 9 (1942): 5 (“*Eine der wenigen friedlichen Kulturinseln dieser Zeit [...] Es ist unser Vorrecht, im Raume einer solchen Insel zu leben*”).

86 See H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, Ch. 9. When in 1940 there seemed to be only one speaker who would participate, the mathematician Andreas Speiser, Olga Fröbe suggested that she would hold a conference just for him. Speiser would have represented the speaker and she the audience; then they would have eaten in the garden and drunk a bottle of Chianti (*ibid.*, 197; see also A. Jaffé, *op. cit.*, 8).

center that the process of individuation aspires to a dynamic state of superior integration or *coincidentia oppositorum* between different fields of knowledge. The free discussions among the lecturers around the round table on the terrace of Casa Gabriella take place on two levels or dimensions, thus in her opinion, the round table represented a symbol – even *the* symbol – of Eranos. Moreover on the terrace, following a meditation of C. G. Jung and Gerardus van der Leeuw on the fifteen years of Eranos, the sculptor Paul Speck placed a little stone monument dedicated “to the unknown spirit of the place” (*Genio loci ignoto*)⁸⁷. In 1950, Olga Fröbe wrote that behind all the themes of the *Yearbooks* there was the underlying idea of Eranos, the idea of the “Inner man”: “It is the energy of the idea and of the original image that often goes through the conferences and takes effect. This impersonal original image is the center of the Eranos play.”⁸⁸

From this year onwards, she named the Eranos work a “play” (*Spiel*), because of its “joyful serious essence” (*heiter-ernste Wesen*)⁸⁹, which

87 R. Ritsema, “The Origin and Opus of Eranos: Reflections at the 55th Conference”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 56 (1987): viii.

88 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 18 (1950): 6. Orig. text: “Alle [Eranos-Jahrbücher] auf eine einzelne, wenn auch komplexe Idee beziehen, nämlich die Idee des Inneren Menschen, seines Weges und dessen Ziel. Es ist die Energetik dieser Idee oder dieses Urbildes, die oft durch die Vorträge hindurchbricht und ‘wirkt’. Dieses unpersönliche Urbild steht beim Eranosspiel im Zentrum.” Besides we may recall that the first Jungian definition of archetype was properly the “primordial image” (*Urbild*). Then she continues: “Die Figuren des Spiels und des Musters sind jedes Jahr anders, aber die Wurzel bleibt sich gleich, wie der Orgelpunkt in der Musik. Die Variationen der Spielfiguren auf der sichtbaren Ebene und ihre Wurzel in der Tiefe ergeben das heiter-ernste Wesen des Spiels” (*ibid.*).

89 *Ibid.* “Wir haben in nahezu zwanzig Jahren ein Forum, eine wissenschaftliche Begegnungsstätte oder auch eine Bühne geschaffen, worauf sich jedes Jahr die Eranos-Tagung ‘abspielt’. Dieses Sich-Abspielen bezieht sich nicht auf eine beliebige Reihe von Vorträgen, sondern auf ein geschlossenes geistiges ‘Spiel’, eine von innen her geordnete und sinnvolle Bewegung in Wort und Begriff um ein jeweiliges zentrales Thema. Der Begriff des ‘spielenden Menschen’, des *Homo Ludens*, ist uns längst durch J. Huizinga, Hermann Hesse und Hugo Rahner bekannt” (*ibid.*, 5). Huizinga’s book seems to have given some significant input to Olga Fröbe; there, the Dutch author reflected on the central rule of the play in culture. Olga Fröbe may have found suggestions from his book in the chapter “Von Ergriffenheit zum heiligen Spiel” as well from his considerations on the religious function of music

“is at the same time the natural counterpart of pure intellectuality”⁹⁰. In this context she defines Eranos as a “Forum”, a “stage” (*Bühne*). In 1953 she used the term “feast” (*Fest*)⁹¹ and compared that which happens in the meetings with a “dance of the sciences”, a dance that each year renews around the same center. We thus find an increasing sense of levity in her definitions.

Olga Fröbe had a deep affection for the physical location of Eranos: she felt that the beauty of nature, its luxuriant flowers in summer, the nearness of the lake which attracted and enchanted many lecturers, were the main reasons for the unique atmosphere of the *Tagungen*. Eranos, she wrote in 1954, is “the garden of all high schools” where the freedom of the spirit and of the research is not constrained in typical doctrinal and epistemic boundaries. Its collegial work, always risky, was nevertheless anchored in a “spiritual earth”: in the physical place where the “Eranos play or representation” happened, she sensed some mysterious, feminine, maternal qualities”⁹².

and dance in ancient societies. “*Das Herz eines jeden Redners – she noted – ist mit im Spiel, nicht nur im Sinne des Gefühls, sondern im Sinne des Seelischen. Dieser seelische Moment ist – innerhalb des so bedeutsamen Spiels der Wissenschaftler – der wesentliche Kern eines jeden Vortrages. Von dort her rührt uns jeder Vortrag an, je nach unserem eigenen, inneren Standpunkt. Dieser Kontakt wird durch den archetypischen Charakter aller Themata unterstützt*” (*ibid.*, 5 f.).

90 *Ibid.*, 7. “Das Spiel ist gleichsam das natürliche Gegengewicht dem rein Intellektuellen gegenüber. ‘Der Geist weht, wo er will’ und wie er will, keineswegs nur im Sinne des Intellekts [...]. Die Idee ist zugleich Meister und Regent des Spiels [...]. Der Eranoskreis wird vom Zentrum her, von der Idee integriert. Von dort strömt die zusammenhaltende Kraft, die unendlich viel stärker ist als alle Regeln und Vorschriften einer Gesellschaft oder einer Vereinigung äußerer Art” (*ibid.*).

91 Her forewords begins with these words: “Wer die Eranos-Tagung mitmacht, realisiert, daß wir jedes Jahr wie zu einem Feste zusammenkommen” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 22 (1953): 5). She also writes: “Das Geschehen der Tagung ist wie ein Tanz der Wissenschaften, ein Tanz, der jedes Jahr vor unseren Augen ein anderes Muster, eine andere Tanzfigur erschafft, anders in der Zusammensetzung der ‘Tänzer’, anders in dem Kreisen um das Zentrum herum” (*ibid.*, 6 f.).

92 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 23 (1954): 6. “*Im Anschluß daran dürfen wir Eranos vielleicht ‘den Garten aller Hochschulen’ nennen, einen Garten, in dem der Freiheit des Geistes und der Forscher keine Schranken gesetzt werden. Die Wärme dieses inneren Klimas schafft Möglichkeiten für die Keime des Außergewöhnlichen und für Werte der Tiefe in der Wissenschaft, die bei anderen*

5.5 Still on Eranos and Psychology

In 1956, remembering the involvement of Carl Gustav Jung, Heinrich Zimmer, and Ernesto Buonaiuti in the origin of Eranos, Olga Fröbe wrote that the Jungian concept or archetype had been the “basis and background for all further attempts” and underlined the rule of psychology as counterpart (*Gegenpol*) to the mechanical attitude of the actual world⁹³.

Once more, we can recognize the closeness to Jung’s epistemological and theoretical approach in her foreword to the Yearbook of the following year – for instance, in her confidence in the positive forces of the spirit (*Geist*) also in times of destruction: she was convinced that light can arise in the obscurity of war, because “the stronger the mechanical, the stronger the humanization” (*je stärker das Mechanische, desto stärker die Humanisierung*). She believed that sciences should increasingly consider the human aspect, and Eranos, in her opinion, could contribute to this attitude⁹⁴.

Voraussetzungen keine Lebensmöglichkeit besitzen.” She also wrote: “Unsere Arbeit ist immer ‘riskant’ gewesen, immer unsicher, immer in Gefahr. Diese Worte decken aber ihr Gegenteil zu [sic], denn wir waren im Grunde immer verankert in einer geistigen Erde, die uns umgab wie eine Mutter. Aus ihr ist Eranos hervorgegangen wie ein Kind, den Zusammenhang mit diesem Urgrund nie verlierend” (*ibid.*).

93 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 25 (1956): 7. “Die Mitwirkung C.G. Jungs hat uns den Zugang zu den Archetypen aufgedeckt, und diese haben Basis und Hintergrund für alle unsere weiteren Versuche geschaffen.”

94 “Diese Humanisierung der Wissenschaft – she pointed out in 1957 – ist eine auffällige Wandlung, die in der ganzen Welt um sich greift. Sie ist ein Zeichen oder Symptom der Zeit. Je mehr das Mechanistische äußerlich zunimmt, desto stärker werden die menschlichen Werte fühlbar und ihre Wirklichkeit wirksamer [...]. In der Tiefe aber, ist eine deutliche Strömung zum Zentrum hin, eine innere Tendenz zur Einigung Europas, die sich früher oder später realisieren wird. So wie in einem neuen und schöpferischen Humanismus alle geistigen Kräfte frei werden wollen, so auch in einem geeinigten Europa” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 26 (1957): 6). She wrote already in her foreword to the Yearbook collecting the conferences at the meetings of 1940 and 1941: “Eine Zeit geht zu Ende; eine neue Zeit bricht an” (Id., “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 8 (1940–1941): 5); and underlined that the “Überlieferung der religiösen Erfahrung, der zeitlosen Urbilder, die heute erneut mit größter Vehemenz zu uns sprechen [...] bedeuten in der heutigen Zeit das Rettende; denn sie sind Träger des Sinns, und in ihnen ist eine regenerierende Kraft, die uns zuströmt, wenn wir uns ihnen zuwenden” (*ibid.*,

Olga Fröbe used to point out that the Eranos lecturers underwent an inner change due to the uniqueness of Eranos, and felt themselves moved or “affected” by it: this was, in fact, a psychological experience. In her conference of 1939 already referred to above, for instance, she linked the speakers’ sense of attachment (*Verbundenheit*) to the archetypal force of Eranos as well as to (analytical) psychology⁹⁵.

Naturally, this was not the only unifying element: according to her own words, Eranos was a place of encounter and of experience (*Begegnungs- und Erfahrungsstätte*). So the speakers were all “small rulers of provinces of one big empire”, who, thanks to the Eranos *Tagungen*, “experienced” the interconnectedness of the different fields of knowledge, and this changed their attitude (*Einstellung*): “They see – she wrote – that they are not isolated, but rather that they are being incorporated into an entity, which initially they were not able to visualize.”⁹⁶ She also she affirms: “We can perhaps define the Eranos task as a ‘contribution to the religious becoming aware

6). There she also wrote: “The war is, for Eranos as well as for the whole world, a crucial test: this means change [*Der Krieg ist für Eranos, wie für die ganze Welt, eine Feuerprobe; dies bedeutet Wandlung*]” (*ibid.*).

95 “Die Verbundenheit der Redner mit Eranos ist eine seltene und erstaunliche Tatsache. Jeder formuliert seine Zugehörigkeit anders, aber jeder fühlt sich eingeschaltet in das Beziehungsnetz von Eranos. Das zeigt sich auch in dem merkwürdigen Sich-Ineinanderfügen der Vorträge, trotz aller Verschiebungen des Programms” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Vortrag”, cit., 7). Nobody knows, but the archetype is in action, she writes. The same thing happens with the public. “Auch für diese ist der Kontakt mit der [here, and in other parts of this script, she deleted the adjective “analytische”] Psychologie und die Synthese der verschiedenen Forschungsgebiete ein inneres Ereignis, ob sie es wissen oder nicht” (*ibid.*).

96 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, *op. cit.*, 7. “Es waren lauter kleine Fürsten von Provinzen eines einzelnen weiten Reichs. Die meisten dieser Fürsten waren selten oder nie über die Grenze ihres Fürstentums getreten. Nun erfahren die Forscher, die nach Eranos berufen werden, zunächst eine große Überraschung; sie sehen, daß sie nicht isoliert dastehen, sondern in einem, ihnen vorerst nicht übersichtlichen Ganzen eingegliedert werden. Sie merken, daß es sich nicht bloß um eine Reihe interessanter Vorträge handelt, wenn auch Vertreter der verschiedenen Fakultäten innerhalb einer Tagung sprechen, sondern daß irgendwo ein verbindendes und versöhnendes Element vorhanden ist, wenn sie auch nicht gleich entdecken, wo sich dieses befindet. Diejenigen aber, die an mehreren Tagungen teilgenommen haben, orientieren sich, befinden sich auf einmal miteinbezogen im zentralen

at present'. This 'becoming aware' [*Bewußtwerden*] embraces the interior and exterior orientation of the human being of our times, his interior way, his connection with the collective human being and with the cosmos – his Sense."⁹⁷

To the question "Is it not the history of culture the expansion of human consciousness?"⁹⁸, she replies: "Therefore analytical psychology is at the core of the *Eranos Tagungen*, while the other fields of knowledge, like Oriental studies, history of religion, philosophy, history of art, are arranged in a circle around this center. The common patrimony of these different researches is symbolism and mythology. The task of *Eranos* is the study of these sources. The soul of the human being has created pathways in the cultural history which we are trying to investigate. The *Tagungen* deal with the experiences of the soul of all times and races, in East and West; they aim, by means of this comparative study, at clarifying parallelism and differences between the two parts of the world in a psychological sense. The boundary of *Eranos* is therefore like a circle with several doors that lead to the different fields of knowledge. In the center we have the psychological research, which represents an analytical, unifying, and creative function."⁹⁹

psychologischen Bereich, und von da an ändert sich ihre Einstellung, beginnt für sie das eigentliche Erlebnis der Tagungen."

97 *Ibid.*, 3. "Wir können vielleicht zunächst die *Eranosaufgabe* als eine 'Mitarbeit an der religiösen Bewußtwerdung unserer Zeit' darstellen. Diese Bewußtwerdung umfaßt die innere und äußere Orientierung des heutigen Menschen, seinen inneren Weg, seine Zusammenhänge mit der kollektiven Menschheit und mit dem Kosmos – seinen Sinn."

98 *Cfr. infra*, note 48.

99 *Ibid.*, 3. Orig. text: "Was ist die Kulturgeschichte anderes als die Geschichte der Erweiterung des Bewußtseins? Darum nimmt die analytische Psychologie bei den *Eranos Tagungen* die zentrale Stelle ein, während die übrigen Forschungsgebiete, wie die Orientalistik, die Religionsgeschichte, die Philosophie, die Kunstgeschichte, im Kreise um dieses Zentrum geordnet sind. Das Gemeingut dieser verschiedenen Forschungen ist die Symbolik und die Mythologie. Das Studium dieser Quellen gehört zu der *Eranos Aufgabe*. Die Seele der Menschen hat sich in der Kulturgeschichte Bahnen geschaffen, die wir nachzuspüren versuchen. Die *Tagungen* befassen sich mit den seelischen Erfahrungen aller Zeiten und Rassen, in Ost und West, und bezwecken durch dieses vergleichende Studium eine Klarstellung der Parallelen

Here, at the intersection of *Bewußtwerden* and the research of the images and the cultural traces, we can see how the boundary of Eranos becomes a circle with many doors “that lead to the different fields of knowledge”; and how, at its center, there is not a person, not a discipline, but psychology as a unifying force of various disciplines and various persons.

6. “In the Island beyond Time”: Eranos as Mandala

It often looks as if Eranos had created a magic circle, a mandala in which the work can proceed in spite of the difficulties of the times. Within this circle *freedom of speech is possible*, and I know that many who were present last August were profoundly touched by this experience, which took place, as Jung one day called it, ‘in the island beyond time’. Many of these specialists consider Eranos as their meeting place, and have discovered that their work is related after all (quite a rediscovery for specialists!¹⁰⁰).

(Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn)¹⁰¹

An integrating and synthetic force is here working in a collective form. The integration of the group is *directed from the center of the circle by the archetypal idea* that is creating something in its own impersonal and irrational way, continuing that which for ages it has sought to express.

(Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn)¹⁰²

We have seen the importance of the theme of circle and center to

und der Unterschiede zwischen beiden Weltteilen, in psychologischem Sinne. Der Grundriß von Eranos ist darum wie ein Kreis mit zahlreichen Toren, die in die verschiedenen Forschungsgebieten führen. Im Zentrum steht die psychologische Forschung, die eine analytische, zusammenfassende und schöpferische Funktion darstellt” (in this typescript the adjective “analytische” close to “Psychologie” is often deleted).

¹⁰⁰ Handwritten addition of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn.

¹⁰¹ Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, “The Psychological Background...”, cit., 5.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

define the integrative, synthetic attitude of Eranos. With the years, in Olga Fröbe's mind the mandala became a central key for interpreting Eranos and a meditative form to perceive – and, in this way, to drive – its development. She used to define Eranos in this manner not in her forewords, but in several other documents preserved today in the Archive as well as in her correspondence with some of the more affectionate speakers, especially Erich Neumann and Mircea Eliade. We already mentioned that in her conference of 1939 she presents Eranos as a “circle with various doors“, with the psychological research at its center¹⁰³. She also compares here the place (*Raum*) created by Eranos with a mandala “or with a magnetic circle”¹⁰⁴.

The association of Eranos with a mandala – in the Jungian sense of this Sanskrit term¹⁰⁵ – attests on the one hand her persevering affinity with Jungian thought, in which this term rises to an elective symbol of the *Selbst*; on the other hand, the mandala as a tool of meditation and concentration, allowing one's own rising awareness, is for her an adequate representation of Eranos: a symbol of a human circle striving for and mirroring a superior sphere thanks to the integration of a common task of renewal. Speaking on the Eranos group, Olga Fröbe pointed out in her preface to *Yearbook* of 1947: “What is important here is that at the center there is not a singular person, but rather an idea, and around it a group or team of scholars that constitutes itself

103 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Vortrag”, cit., 3.

104 *Ibid.* “Oder einem magnetischen Kreis” (handwritten addition of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn). Then she goes on: “In its boundaries and free atmosphere it is possible to work in search of the soul in the chaotic times in which we are living [*in dessen Rahmen und freier Atmosphäre eine seelische Forschungsarbeit möglich ist, inmitten des chaotischen bewegten Zeitraumes in dem wir leben*]. Free speech [*freie Aussprache*] are there possible, which are unobstructed by racial or religious limitations” [*ohne durch rassische oder religiöse Schranken gehemmt zu werden*] (*ibid.*). See also the analysis in R. Bernardini, *op. cit.*, Ch. 1.5

105 See particularly *Concerning Mandala Symbolism* (1950) and *Mandalas* (1955), in *CW* 9i.

differently each time. The integrating force of this idea is a vivid fact in the developing process of Eranos. Here is also its peculiarity.”¹⁰⁶

The idea of Eranos as a mandala seems to have taken place quite early in Olga Fröbe’s reflections. In fact, her thoughts on her psychological work and on the meaning of Eranos, which were indissolubly associated, were accompanied by pictorial representations or drawings (and in this respect, one can recognize a connection between the individual analytical function of the mandala we are going to talk about, and of the former geometrical “paintings of meditation” which Jung quite pitilessly criticized)¹⁰⁷.

In the Eranos Archive are preserved some drawings in which Olga Fröbe represents Eranos in form of a mandala. From such documents, part of her incessant *Selbstanalyse*, we can infer a special form of meditation, with regard to the sense of Eranos as *Urbild* and its “material”, “terrestrial” evolution. The two drawings, which are reproduced in this volume, represent the program of the conference of 1947 “viewed as circle” (*Das Eranos Programm als Kreis gesehen*) (FIGURE 11a, p. 235) and the sequence of the themes of the conferences until 1948 (*Themata der Eranos Tagungen von 1933 bis 1947 (correction: 1948) im Kreise geordnet*) (FIGURE 11b, p. 235).

In one typescript attached to the “Eranos mandala” of 1947 she declares: “This diagram shows the program of the *Tagung* from a different perspective.” Then she observes: “*The center is empty*. The circle

106 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 15 (1947): 6. Orig. text: “Wichtig ist, daß hier keine einzelne Persönlichkeit im Zentrum steht, sondern eine Idee, und um diese herum eine Gruppe oder ein Team von Forschern, die immer anders zusammengesetzt werden. Die integrierende Kraft dieser Idee ist eine durchaus lebendige Tatsache im Werdensprozeß von Eranos. Hier liegt auch seine Eigenart.”

107 In a one-page document (under the title: “Text. Die Eranos Mandala”), which accompanied the drawings of the Eranos mandala, she traces a list of seven points regarding her concept of mandala in connection with Eranos. For instance the first mandala, she writes at point 1, was drawn by her in 1927 as the ground plan of a temple (*Grundriss eines Tempels*); then she mentions a mandala of 1934 connected with Jung with the Shiva and Shakti as “*Conjunctio*” at the center, and in 1947, apparently for the first time, she drew Eranos itself as a mandala.

closest to the center is represented by psychology. Representative: C. G. Jung. *The 12 segments of the circle*, comparable to lotus leaves, relate all to the center and the psychological circle. None of the research areas is more important than any other. They are equally valid in their relevance. Each Eranos program represents such a circle. *Behind this circle are all previous circles and programs*. They are always present. All the speakers of the earlier meetings stand invisibly, but effectively, behind the speakers of the program of 1947.”¹⁰⁸

These words are probably the most appropriate to comment on the “Eranos mandala” drawn by Olga Fröbe. They are fascinating witnesses to an interior, passionate and unique journey. They recall once more her idea of Eranos, characterized by the interconnection of disciplines, synthesis of knowledge, and the sense of a superior, leading force working for the construction of a new state of consciousness.

108 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Eranos Mandala” (one typescript page with underlining by O. Fröbe-Kapteyn with a red and blue crayon, attached to the Eranos mandala drawings, 1947–1948) (EF). “Dieses Diagramm zeigt das Programm der Tagung von einem anderen Standort aus gesehen. Die 12 Abteilungen des Kreises, den Blättern des Lotus vergleichbar, sind alle auf das Zentrum und auf den psychologischen Kreis bezogen. Das Zentrum ist leer. Der Kreis, der dem Zentrum am nächsten ist wird durch die Psychologie vertreten. Vertreter: C.G. Jung [...]. Keines der Forschungsgebiete ist wichtiger als das andere. Sie sind in der Bezogenheit gleichwertig. Jedes Eranos Programm stellt einen solchen Kreis dar. Hinter diesem Kreise stehen alle früheren Kreise oder Programme. Sie sind immer gegenwärtig. Alle Redner der früheren Tagungen stehen unsichtbar, aber wirksam hinter den Rednern des Programms 1947.” She also wrote for instance in the foreword to the *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 1945, vol. 13, with the title *Zur Idee des Archetypischen* and dedicated to Jung: “Die Zusammenarbeit C.G. Jungs mit hervorragenden Spezialforschern und Vertretern vieler Fakultäten, wie sie im Eranoskreis möglich war, hat aus der Vielfalt der Darbietungen ein zusammenhängendes Ganzes gestaltet, eine Synthese, die sich auf das Leben und seine tiefsten menschlichen Probleme bezieht. Das Spezialistentum, die Isolierung der einzelnen Forschungen wurde hier aufgehoben, und es zeigte sich mit erstaunlicher Klarheit, welche nahe Beziehung zwischen allen besteht. Diese Bezogenheit wurzelt in der archetypischen Natur des jeweils behandelten Stoffes. Ein Blick auf die Themata der Tagungen verdeutlicht dies am besten: die Erlösungsidee, die Große Mutter, Tod und Wiedergeburt, die Mysterien u.a. – der universale und archetypische Charakter dieser Themen ist unbestreitbar” (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, “Vorwort”, in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 13 (1945): 6). Also in 1950 she dedicated a volume to C. G. Jung (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn (ed.), *Aus der Welt der Urbilder. Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 18).

(In Form of) Conclusion

Olga Fröbe felt strongly committed to Eranos and gave all her energy to this task. Naturally, such an extreme dedication can likewise lead to an extreme identification or even obsession. But generally speaking, where is the limit between devotion and obsession? Between servitude and tyranny, how can the boundaries between subject and object be recognized? Which dynamic forces separate the sense of a mission from the fall into a “*psychische Inflation*”? And to what extent can the feeling of one’s own smallness in view of the greatness of a task lead to refusing to confront oneself with other opinions? It is not easy to answer these questions.

In his autobiography written with Aniela Jaffé¹⁰⁹, Jung tells us that, after the separation from Freud, at the beginning of his long “confrontation with the unconscious”, he feared he might suffer a psychosis – particularly because of the power of the images that seized him. A fundamental factor preventing him from that, as he writes, was the so-called normal life, the everyday flow of existence with its commitments and, last but not least, his family. According to him, these facts constituted a base, a ground (*Boden*), in which he always trusted: they are significant conditions for the stability of the ego-complex. Besides, his famous tower of Bollingen was a sort of maternal, “individual ground” which allowed him a proximity to the roots of nature: his inner nature as well nature in general¹¹⁰.

Olga Fröbe showed a strong receptiveness, which is usually considered a female characteristic. At the same time, she was a very determined person with an untiring tenacity. Deeply persuaded of

109 C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. A. Jaffé (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1963), Ch. 6.

110 In his Introduction to the work which dramatically witnesses Jung deepest journey into himself following the dramatic visionary experiences of 1913, Sonu Shamdasani poignantly writes that the Bollingen tower may be regarded as “a three-dimensional continuation of *Liber Novus*” (S. Shamdasani, “*Liber Novus*. The ‘Red Book’ of C. G. Jung”, in C. G. Jung, *The Red Book. Liber Novus*, ed. S. Shamdasani, pref. U. Hoerni, trans. M. Kyburz, J. Peck & S. Shamdasani (New York, NY/London: W. W. Norton Company, 2009), 216).

the fertilizing potential of the feminine, she observed: "Generally we are used to consider an organizing and managerial activity as a male activity. However, it seems to me that it is specifically feminine. The forming and procreative force is always feminine, even if it deals with the creative activity of a man."¹¹¹

Her robust sense of responsibility was not only towards (her idea of) Eranos, but also towards its spiritual godfathers who had disappeared (particularly R. Otto and R. Wilhelm), and towards the living group of scholars that allowed, year after year, its continuity.

In the solitude of Casa Gabriella, Olga Fröbe probably passed some difficult periods, despite – or perhaps also because of – the imaginative and visionary *puissance* surrounding her. She must have suffered under the archetypal and – as she wrote – sometimes tyrannical power, and we can hardly imagine how much she was at their mercy. Her suffering and passion – her *Leidenschaft* – were directly linked, I believe, to her profound sense of devotion to her work, which she considered as a mission, and her fatalistic attitude, which increased after that decisive meeting – "fatal and timeless" – with Rudolf Otto in Marburg in 1932, when "the curtain, like in a theatre, was raised"¹¹².

Many years later she wrote to Ximena de Angulo-Roelli: "I know that I have to go my way to the end – alone. There will be no delegating. Eranos and I cannot be separated for as long as I live."¹¹³ She even

111 O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag", cit., 5. Orig. text: "*Wir denken und sehen im allgemeinen eine organisierende und dirigierende Tätigkeit als eine männliche Aktivität. Sie ist aber, wie mir scheint spezifisch weiblich. Das Gestaltende und Gebärende ist stets weiblich, auch wenn es sich um die schöpferische Aktivität eines Mannes handelt.*"

112 "*Als ich an einem denkwürdigen Novemberabend im Jahre 1932 an der Türe des große Religionswissenschaftlers Rudolf Otto in Marburg läutete, trat ich in diesen schöpferischen Moment ein, und wie auf einer Bühne hob sich der Vorhang. Als Otto selbst die Türe aufmachte, war alles an ihm ein Willkommen, mir, Eranos und dem Augenblick gegenüber. Hier war ein inneres Treffen sowie eine äußere Begegnung, und er erkannte die Gültigkeit der Situation*" (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort", in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 24 (1955): 5 f.; see also W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 23 f.).

113 W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 145.

felt her own process of individuation coincident with that of Eranos: "Eranos is my Individuation. That was so when it started, during the entire further development and so it is, most intensely, also today. It seems to be my destiny to carry out my way to the Individuation in this manner. And I had to do that alone. Each human being is alone on his inner way, there is not any alternative. Therefore I have also never worked together with someone and therefore I had to do alone all that concerns Eranos [...]. This is the reason why I get 'in excitement' if somebody intervenes in any part of these activities. If somebody disturbs the psychic process of another, there must be difficulties. Because nobody can stop this..."¹¹⁴

So, her devotion was at the same time a strong identification, which sometimes did make it uneasy to work with her, as Ximena de Angulo-Roelli experienced¹¹⁵, and which brought her to the idea that with her death also Eranos would come to an end¹¹⁶. Indeed, her somehow unconditional attitude often forced her to make decisions which could not be questioned and the motivation of which could not always be easily understood¹¹⁷.

114 "Eranos ist meine Individuation. Das war so als es begann, während der gesamten weiteren Entwicklung und so ist es auch heute in größter Intensität. Es scheint mein Schicksal zu sein, meinen Weg zur Individuation auf diese Weise zu vollziehen. Und ich mußte das alleine tun. Jeder Mensch ist allein auf seinem inneren Weg, da gibt es keine Alternative. Deswegen habe ich auch nie mit irgend jemandem zusammengearbeitet und deshalb mußte ich alles mit Eranos Zusammenhängende allein machen [...]. Das ist der Grund, warum ich 'in Aufregung' gerate, wenn mir jemand bei irgendeinem Teil dieser Aktivitäten dazwischen kommt. Wenn jemand den psychischen Prozeß eines anderen stört, muß es Schwierigkeiten geben. Denn niemand kann das aushalten..." (O. Fröbe-Kapteyn to X. de Angulo-Roelli, September 7, 1951, in H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, 285).

115 According to her, the strong emotional identification with Eranos made Olga Fröbe continuously afraid of being separated from her own work. In fact, Ximena de Angulo-Roelli interrupted the collaboration with her after been groundlessly accused by the latter of having stolen the scripts of the lecturers she had to review (personal communication). See in this regard also W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 145.

116 H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, 285.

117 Her habit to invite only male lecturers was perhaps also a consequence of her understanding of the psychic dynamic Animus-Anima: as suggested in an unpublished document on a *mandala* preserved in today's Eranos Archive, she considered herself as the Anima, and the lecturers as the Animus of the Eranos

In the 1950s, Olga Fröbe initially disagreed with the proposed plan made by Joseph Campbell for the English publications of the Eranos conferences in the Bollingen series. As Hakl observes, she offers in this connection some notable definitions of her understanding of Eranos. To Campbell she wrote: "I am not Eranos, I serve it. The speakers at every meeting are a unit, bound by their individual relationship to the central theme and to that dynamic force that we call Eranos. The central theme of every volume is an archetypal idea, and the speakers formulate their lectures within that frame. It is all based on Jung's discovery of the archetypal world, and anyone who has come in contact with archetypal energy will know that he is up against something immensely powerful, immensely alive and creative, in fact the creative forces themselves. The lectures move around a center, not represented by any personality but by an idea that we call Eranos. It stands for the Quest, or for the Self, or the Way of the Soul. *Au fond*, it escapes definition, being a paradox and an irrational thing."¹¹⁸

Some years later she wrote to Jung: "My own responsibility has unmistakable limits. *It is not I alone who carries the responsibility for Eranos. Essentially the responsibility lies in a totally impersonal*

group – a quite curiously "concrete" interpretation, one may add, of the archetypal polarity theorized by Jung. Moreover, one can mention her decision to prohibit the public from asking the speakers questions (it would be interesting, but impossible here, to reflect on the connection of Olga Fröbe's decision with her concept of the interior, almost "sacred" reception of wisdom coming from the lecturers, which inevitably proves a kind of hierarchical vision. Furthermore, I must remember in this context the expulsion of some very affectionate Eranos speakers. I do not mean J. W. Hauer or G. R. Heyer, because of their Nazi affiliation, but specifically K. Kerényi and L. Massignon: the first "continued to be one of the stars until 1950, after which Olga Fröbe proscribed him. In her view, he had become *too* charismatic. He returned once to the Eranos platform in 1963, after Olga's death"; the second lectured "for the last time in 1955, when he violated Olga Fröbe's ban on politics by declaring his support of Algerian independence; she did not invite him again" (W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 148 and 154).

¹¹⁸ In *ibid.*, 143.

sphere. My task is, first and foremost, to grasp and bring to realization something that has neither form nor name.”¹¹⁹

According to Jung, the process of individuation develops in the right direction when the person succeeds in acquiring an attitude of respect or humility towards a greater sphere, and when the Ego opens to the reality of the *Self* through and thanks to contact with the archetypes; nevertheless, one must keep a state of continuous and vigilant awareness in order to escape falling into the psychic inflation due to the bipolar nature of archetypes. We can consider this new point of view as an opening towards love; it becomes simpler to love oneself as well as the others when one is able to see through a new perspective his/her own problems – i.e. no more as an individual, but as a collective being. Jung certainly was fully aware that the relationship with something more powerful is essential for the human being, and that the unconscious may submerge the person if he/she does not have a kind of stability in “this world”. According to him, the unconscious can be as dangerous as dynamite. In fact, archetypes have an inherent bipolar quality, both constructive and destructive. The process of individuation as *Bewußtwerdung* cannot avoid the paradoxical forces of psychic reality, but can favor an equilibrium between conscious and unconscious.

Certainly Olga Fröbe’s service towards Eranos demonstrates her spirit of sacrifice for an assignment that went well beyond herself and the limits of her existence. Her task, as she declared in a quotation I mentioned at the beginning, was to prepare the stage where the “Eranos play” could be performed. The “mandala of Eranos”, on which she meditated deeply, was not just something ideal, much less

119 Olga Fröbe to Jung, February 25, 1953, in H. Th. Hakl, *op. cit.*, 237 f. See also *ibid.*, 248, note 41. In his answer of March 20, Jung pragmatically argues for the necessity of accepting the fact that the English translation could not reflect the atmosphere of Eranos (“Eranos ‘made in the United States’ is no more the same!”) and asks her, successfully, to stop the “useless battle” [*nutzlosen Kampf*] against the project of the American edition. Subsequently there have been published, in the *Bollingen Series*, the *Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, six volumes which included a selection of the Eranos lectures (1954–68).

only transcendent; it was formed and vivified by the interactivity of various people. It represented an attempt to reach a new form of knowledge through a community effort. In this sense Olga Fröbe, with her imaginative *puissance* and her tireless work, was serving the “Self of a Group”. At the same time, this task was connected with a “totally impersonal sphere”, with an “immense Something” which she felt strongly and also painfully, as a demand for responsibility, responsibility in view of the times she lived in. The continuity of Eranos which she often underlines and which surprised Jung himself, owes a lot to her character. In fact, of her passionate, untiring service, this is what remains of her work, going beyond the inevitable human weaknesses and leaving a heritage for which we are still grateful¹²⁰.

I wish to conclude with some words written by A. Portmann in 1961: “The Eranos *Tagungen* are a work of silence. They are developed by individuals, whereby each one cultivates his/her own field; they know of each other, however, and find new strength in this certainty. And are the meetings not also a joyful witness to the special capacities of a woman who, silently, served the *one* big task with continuity, accomplishing her work as she did, in an exemplary way at Eranos?”¹²¹

120 In this respect, see McGuire: “For Olga Fröbe, Eranos, which she insisted was without plan or program, was animated by a spirit to which she had intuitive access and which assumed the characteristic of an archetype. Insofar Olga had become the celebrant of Eranos, the guardian of its flame, the impresario who intuited the themes, assembled the speakers, and orchestrated their interplay, her arduous journey to individuation was complete” (W. McGuire, *op. cit.*, 27).

121 A. Portmann, *op. cit.*, 28. Orig. text: “Die Eranos-Tagungen sind ein Werk der Stille. Sie werden erarbeitet von Einzelnen, die, jeder für sich, ihr Feld bebauen, die aber voneinander wissen und in dieser Gewißheit neue Kraft finden. Und sind diese Tagungen nicht auch ein beglückendes Zeugnis für die besonderen Möglichkeiten der Frau, die, in der Stille, in Stetigkeit der einen großen Aufgabe dienend, ihr Werk leistet, wie es in Eranos in vorbildlicher Weise geschehen ist?”